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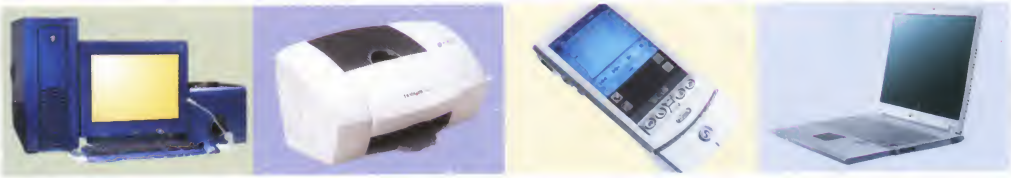

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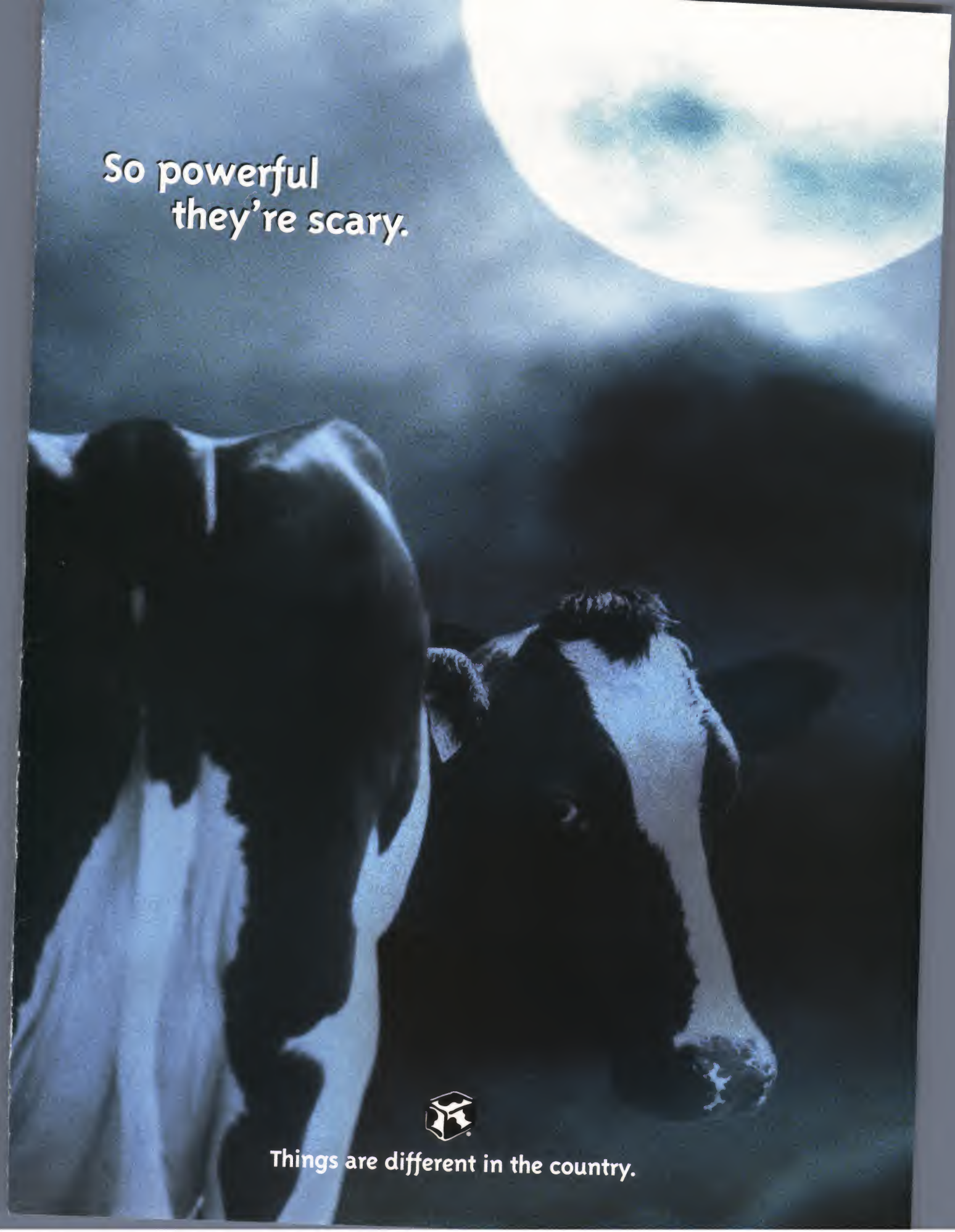
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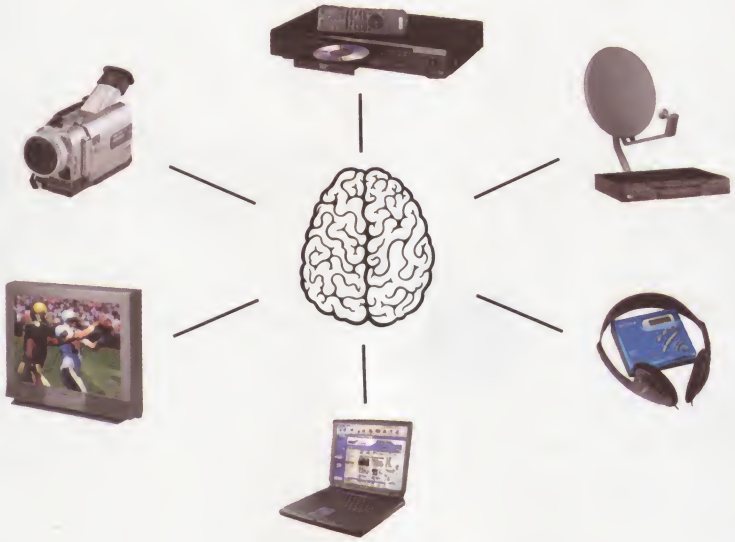

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from the editor

JANICE CHEN

The Top of the Year

It just keeps getting better. Each year *Computer Shopper* editors meet to consider the various products we've tested and used over the past 12 months, then hand-pick our annual Top 100. As we look back on the year, we're always astounded at the innovations introduced—and often at the price drops that accompanied them. This year was no exception.

Turn to "The Top 100 Products of 2001" (p. 103), and you'll find desktops with brawny processing muscle at both the high and low ends of the price spectrum. For instance, full-throttle Pentium 4s with fast RDRAM roared to speeds of 1.8GHz (they have since hit 2GHz) and were stoked with this year's gaming imperative, the blazing GeForce3 graphics card. But we also liked systems based on the Athlon engine, which can often outperform Pentium 4s while yielding a better bargain. And in the budget range, we found systems for less than $1,000 with plenty of power and capable components.

Among notebooks, some of our favorites were increasingly competent ultraportables, which deliver ample Pentium III power without the pounds. At the other end of the weight scale we found full-bodied notebooks that rival desktops with gigahertz speed, great graphics, and DVD/CD-RW drives. And if you're looking for affordable portables, we've got a few favorites to recommend at prices as low as $1,299.

We were also impressed with innovations in mobile gadgets and desk-bound hardware. PDAs made outstanding strides this year, culminating in crisp color displays and new expansion capabilities. Other hardware favorites include fast new rewritable drives, hard drives that hit 100GB storage capacity, affordable (at last!) flat-panel displays, astonishingly inexpensive printers, and high-res digital cameras.

Our software picks make the year's top hardware seem all the more enticing. From the far-from-basic OS—Windows XP—to creativity, productivity, and Web-design apps, these packages bring more capabilities to the hardware platform than ever. And our favorite games splash your monitor with more realistic action and complex strategies. Perhaps the most ground-breaking endeavor is Majestic, a life-invading game that employs e-mail, instant messaging, phone messages, and faxes to put you in the center of intrigue.

Of course, each year you can expect a certain amount of bust amid the boom, a topic that technologist John C. Dvorak once again covers in his Bottom Five list.

Beyond our Top 100 coverage, you'll find plenty of other technology worth exploring. As rewritable DVD drives become more affordable, many amateur auteurs will want to edit home movies and burn them to DVDs. Our Shopper's Guide, "Do-It-Yourself DVDs" (p. 124), tells you what you need to move your video from camcorder to computer to the family-room DVD player.

Those who use devices that rely on portable storage—digital cameras, MP3 players, and PDAs—will want to take a look at our exploration of the competing formats. In "Sizing Up Portable Storage" (p. 132), we survey the options and help you decide which format is right for you and your gadgets.

Finally, after reading about all this great technology, you'll probably want to hit the Web and start shopping. Before you do, turn to our feature "Secrets of Online Power Shopping" (p. 140) for 25 surprising ways in which you can harness the features of various Web sites to shop smarter.

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FINE-TUNING HELPS THE FRUGAL

Your September feature "Fine-Tune Your PC for Free" (p. 136) was a big help for a guy like me, who's just starting a business, has to do almost everything single-handedly, and doesn't have money to burn. I tried almost every piece of software you mentioned in the article, and some of it has proven very useful. Thanks for the tips.

With all the available high-tech gadgetry and the gazillions of software applications (which can overwhelm even the savviest users), we often overlook the potential of the gear we already have. My tip is to start with what you already own and learn how to use it to get the most out of it. You may be surprised to discover all kinds of new potential, and you can make smarter purchases when needed or desired.

TED SCHAGHY

Below is just one of the many letters we received congratulating Alice and Bill on their nine-year anniversary of writing "The Hard Edge." –Ed.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM A NEWCOMER

Hi, and happy nine years of writing "The "Hard Edge." I read it for the first time today, so I'll have to wait until next year to send you that dollar for each year I've been a fan.

In reference to your comments in the August "Hard Edge" (p. 208), I was hoping you could help me determine when Intel might release a Pentium 4 with the larger L2 cache you mentioned. I'm considering buying a new PC and would like to avoid having old technology as long as possible. Thanks for your help, and remember to budget in that dollar next year.

TERRY MORGAN

The "Northwood" Pentium 4 with 512K of L2 cache, manufactured using a 0.13-micron process, should have made its debut August 27, but there were rumors about a problem cramming all that stuff onto such a small die. It should be introduced by the time you read this, but unless you're heavily into graphics and video, you can get yourself a Pentium III motherboard that supports DDR SDRAM and do just as well with just about everything else for a lot less—at least until Intel cans the Pentium III.

As far as I'm concerned, you really shouldn't buy any Pentium 4 system until DDR SDRAM is available for it, whether it's using a chipset from Intel or Via.

—Bill O'Brien

CORRECTION

In our October story, "Web Hosting 101" (p. 172), we incorrectly reported Exodus Communications had gone out of business. At the time the article was written, the company was in business, but had suffered a net loss of $1.23 billion for the six months ending June 2001. After we went to press, the company's CEO resigned, and its stock price dropped from a 52-week high of approximately $70 to less than $1.

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Intel Advances From III to 4

Intel's Pentium 4 processor hasn't seen soaring sales. Now, the chip maker is trying to boost demand by phasing out the older Pentium III and introducing a new chipset, the 845, which pairs the Pentium 4 with inexpensive SDRAM.

Although a generally stagnant PC market may explain the sluggish sales, the first desktops outfitted with Intel's flagship processor were expensive—and delivered underwhelming performance.

Before the advent of the 845 chip set, the processor required Rambus DRAM (RDRAM), which is significantly more expensive than memory paired with either Intel Pentium III or

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BEK SHAKIROV

AMD processors. Software performance lagged because few apps have been compiled to take advantage of the Pentium 4's advanced architecture. The result? Consumers have avoided costly machines that delivered marginal performance gains.

With the introduction of the 845 chipset, Intel aims to incorporate the Pentium 4 into systems priced as low as $800. The company's goal, says spokesman George Alfs, is to support all types of memory for all types of users, from SDRAM for consumers who use only lightweight applications to RDRAM for video professionals and hard-core gamers who need turbocharged power and speed.

And that may be the right track. Mike Feibus, a principal analyst at Mercury Research, recently raised his forecast for 2001 Pentium 4 sales from 14 million to 20 million units, saying that the 845 chipset and price cuts in the high-end Pentium 4 lines might finally give consumers a compelling reason to buy a new system.

But you might be surprised if you're looking for a sweet deal on an outdated Pentium III. Although Intel doesn't comment on future pricing, the company has historically introduced new processors and chipsets at an equivalent (or lower) cost to those being replaced. *—Adam Fisher*

Expanding XP

Want to add a little excitement to XP? **Microsoft** recently unleashed an expansion pack to showcase the multimedia prowess of the new OS.

The Microsoft Plus for Windows XP add-on will focus on digital media, the visual experience, and gaming, says Geordie Wilson, a product manager in the company's digital-media division. The $39.95 software creates a more stimulating environment for entertainment, he says.

Microsoft Plus for Windows XP

The digital-media apps include a personal DJ, voice-command software for Windows Media Player, a CD-label maker, MP3-audio-management tools, and snazzy skins and 3D visualizations.

Wilson is particularly enthusiastic about the pack's speaker-enhancement app. "We know the distortion profile of most of the common desktop speakers, and Plus corrects the distortion," Wilson says. "The difference is amazing."

Apps to upgrade the PC visual experience include realistic 3D screensavers and desktop themes. These add-ons harness the power of DirectX for eye-popping 3D modeling, he says. Three arcade-style games also draw on XP's 3D dexterity: HyperBowl, The Labyrinth, and Russian Square.

To run Plus, you'll need a graphics accelerator with at least 16MB of memory.

—Rik Fairlie

Function Keys

A new breed of key-chain-size devices can plug into your computer's USB ports and do the work of hard drives, security keys, and more.

These tiny storage devices, which pack between 8MB and 512MB of memory, include the DiskOnKey *(www.diskonkey.com)*, Flash USBDrive *(www.usbdrive.com)*, Q *(www.agatetech.com)*, and ThumbDrive *(www.thumbdrive.com)*. These units aren't actually hard drives, however. They store your applications and data in nonvolatile memory, although your computer treats them as plain old hard drives.

DiskOnKey

These mighty mites are just the beginning. Small and thin multigigabyte hard drives are on the horizon, according to Jason Ziller, president of the **USB Implementers Forum** *(www.usb.org)*. Moreover, security keys will make laptops useless to thieves. "If you have a notebook, and you open it, you can't even turn it on until you stick the key in," he says.

Tiny USB gadgets also act as miniature, platform-independent applications. The PlayApp Key *(www.playapp.com)* is a $44 device that generates and remembers passwords, encryption codes, and PGP passphrases. It creates difficult-to-hack passwords for each of your accounts and enters them for you automatically.

The devices' biggest flaw may be their greatest asset: diminutive size. After all, you don't want your data to slip between the couch cushions. *—Kevin Savetz*

NET NOW

What Will OS X Bring To the Party?

The belle of **Apple Computer's** ball is Mac OS X *(www.apple.com/macosx)*. Decked out with long-awaited necessities such as protected memory and preemptive multitasking, Apple's new OS makes a splash with its colorful Aqua interface. But is anyone coming to the party?

To ensure success, Apple is faced with the enormous task of encouraging dozens of Mac software companies to port their existing Mac OS 9 applications to the Unix-based OS X, using a process that Apple has dubbed "carbonizing." Widespread support for the OS is critical to its success, and industry observers predict that Mac users will upgrade only when enough developers produce native versions of critical apps.

Fortunately for Apple, the carbonizing process is well under way. Apple says more than 1,000 carbonized applications are already available for OS X, with additional titles coming soon. (For a list of apps that are available or in the pipeline, visit ***www.macworld.com/2001/03/21/osx-road.html.***) Major releases include **Aladdin's** StuffIt, Apple's Final Cut Pro, **Connectix's** Virtual PC, **Deneba's** Canvas, and **FileMaker's** FileMaker Pro.

Software heavyweights such as **Adobe** and **Microsoft** have also thrown their hats into the ring, promising to port their flagship applications to OS X.

According to Erik Ryan, a product manager at Microsoft, the company should deliver a native version of Office 10 for Mac OS X this fall. Adobe has promised carbonized versions of InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop, but had not disclosed release dates at press time.

Although many applications are available for OS X, only time will tell if the Mac faithful will enthusiastically adopt the radically new OS. After all, users are likely to upgrade only when they can install the OS without a drop in productivity. But with the promise of plentiful carbonized apps and a critical OS update set to have occurred by the time you read this, OS X could become the life of the party.

—Atticus Fisher

Periodically Entertaining

E-books haven't exactly soared to the top of the best-seller list, electronic or otherwise. But what about electronic versions of other types of printed material, such as newspapers and magazines?

Periodicals may be a good way for users to get comfortable with the e-book format, says Barrie Rappaport, senior account executive with Ipsos-NPD, a market-research company. That's because reading the electronic version of a newspaper or magazine on a small screen is less strenuous than the extended reading required for a book, she says. Also, carrying an e-book reader is much more convenient than toting an armful of newspapers and magazines.

Franklin eBookMan

Several publications, including *Fortune, Money, Newsweek, The Wall Street Journal,* and *Time,* provide electronic content. Vin Crosbie, chairman of the E-Book Newsstand Association *(www.ebna.org)*, says a dozen major magazines and newspapers are planning to launch Microsoft Reader versions late this year.

Many PDA users already read periodicals on handheld devices equipped with software such as AvantGo. According to Crosbie, people don't want a unit that can only be used for reading.

"Most consumers want to purchase a device that can do many more things: personal organizers, MP3, cellular telephony, and Internet access," he says.

To that end, manufacturers are developing more multifunction devices, such as the eBookMan from **Franklin Electronic Publishers,** which may boost the e-book market—and give periodicals an even bigger slice of the pie.

—Elaine X. Grant

Wireless Ads: Fun or Frustration?

As Internet-content companies struggle to squeeze profits out of online advertising, advertisers are eyeing another tech-savvy market: users of wireless devices.

But a report released earlier this year by research firm IDC suggests that wireless advertisers face an uphill battle. Asked about new-media forms of promotion, consumers surveyed were most opposed to wireless ads.

That's not stopping companies such as wireless-game maker **nGame** *(www.ngame.com)* from taking on the challenge and peppering its new PDA game, Rat Race, with wireless ads.

Players can opt in for information about sponsors, and take part in interactive exercises such as trivia quizzes and surveys, says Alex Green, vice president of business development at nGame. Because game players are looking to be entertained, the ads were designed to be "games within a game," he says.

But will players be entertained by marketing pitches? Maybe.

"On a global scale, trials have shown that interactive, entertaining campaigns are more positively perceived and generate the highest response rates," says Rosalie Nelson, research director for consulting firm Ovum. "Nevertheless, these games still have to add value and be constructed with care."

—Tamara Holmes

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 26

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NET NOW

Very Dedicated Devices

The all-is-more approach doesn't always translate to good technology. After all, do you *really* need a Web browser in your wristwatch? With that in mind, some companies are developing handheld gadgets that go beyond Net surfing and use the Internet to obtain device-specific content.

Evolve Communications' ***(www.guideremote.com)*** Guide Remote, a $199.99 universal remote that controls up to 16 devices, also displays interactive television listings and activities on its screen. Evolve's proprietary listings are updated by synchronizing the remote with a Net-connected PC. The unit also provides TV-related content, including polls, coupons, and shopping links.

"Not everything needs to be a browser," says Brandt Thompson, Evolve's vice president of content and product development. He says Evolve's aim is a single-function, preconfigured device that does one or two things well.

Evolve Communications Guide Remote

Similarly, **Ultradata Systems'** ***(www.ultradatasystems.com)*** $49.95 Trip Link handheld is a travel guide that employs **Rand McNally's** ***(www.randmcnally.com)*** content and is dedicated only to travel information. Generate detailed driving directions on the Rand McNally site, then download the information to the calculator-size handheld and take your customized, updated maps on the road.

Will we see more such devices in the future? Bruce Kasrel, a senior analyst at Forrester Research, believes that such handhelds will have to be inexpensive and excel at what they do to succeed.

They should also provide a needed service, a prerequisite that someone should have mentioned to Robin Southgate. The student at Brunel University in London has proposed the Toasty ***(www.brunel.ac.uk/~dt97rrs/report2.htm)***, an Internet-enabled toaster that will burn the current weather forecast on a piece of toast.

—Steven Abrams

The Shipping Will Cost You

Customers face increasingly byzantine standards for online-purchase shipping charges. We looked at five major e-tailers to discover how much it costs to ship one, five, or 10 compact discs. The best price in each column appears in red.

	One CD	Five CDs	10 CDs
Amazon.com [www.amazon.com]	$2.98	$6.94	$11.89
Barnes & Noble [www.bn.com]	$3.48	$7.44	$12.39
Buy.com [www.buy.com]	$1.95	$9.75	$19.50
CDnow [www.cdnow.com]	$2.99	$7.94	$11.90
Tower Records [www.towerrecords.com]	$2.95	$4.95	$5.95
Wal-Mart [www.walmart.com]	$2.93	$6.82	$11.66

Shipping information from Aug. 9, 2001

Not Your Father's PC...or TV

Personal video recorders (PVRs), the devices that let you record, stop, start, and rewind TV broadcasts, have been the Next Big Thing for a few years now. But PVRs such as TiVo ***(www.tivo.com)*** and Microsoft's UltimateTV ***(www.ultimatetv.com)*** are expensive—expect to pay from $400 to $600 for the box and the monthly subscription fee you need to access all its features. And you can't upgrade to a bigger hard drive unless you have mondo high-tech acumen and are willing to violate the warranty.

A less elegant alternative can be found in the growing number of PC graphics cards that, when installed in your computer and connected to your television, have the same TV-controlling features as PVRs, but cost less and allow for expandability. A good example is ATI Technologies' ***(www.ati.com)*** All-In-Wonder series. The $250 All-In-Wonder Radeon is half the cost of a PVR, and the Internet-based channel guide, Guide Plus, is free.

"UltimateTV and TiVo are pretty much single-function devices: TV only," says Huy Nguyen, a product manager at nVidia ***(www.nvidia.com)***. Not so nVidia's new Personal Cinema, he says. "[It] combines all the functions of TiVo plus DVD playback, video editing, and 3D gaming." The Personal Cinema product, which is marketed by companies such as Compro Technologies, isn't a graphics card, but an adapter that acts as a video go-between for your television and PC. Unfortunately, Personal Cinema only works with graphics cards powered by nVidia graphics chips.

Although using your PC to control TV viewing is less expensive and more expandable than a PVR, the PC-control method requires your television to be tethered to your computer—not the best solution if living space is limited. But according to ATI product manager Blair Birmingham, Radeon users aren't deterred. "Twenty percent put their PCs in the same room as their TVs," he says.

Compro Personal Cinema

If that's unacceptable, you can always watch television on your PC, a capability that's been the Next Big Thing for *many* years now.

—Atticus Fisher

SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 34

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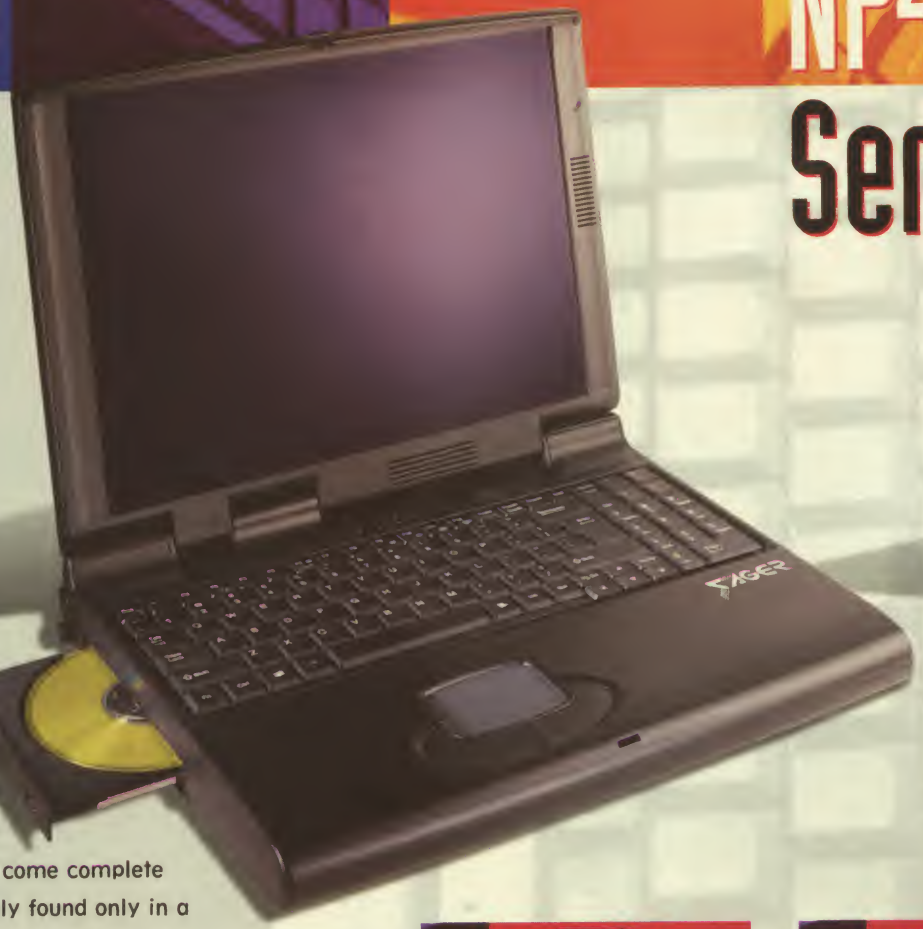

Sager's NP8560 Desktop Replacement comes loaded with the latest, cutting-edge technology in processing for a notebook. This new capability increases bandwidth from 100MHz to 133MHz and that translates into ultra-fast speed for memory intensive applications. As well, these notebooks come complete with upgraded features normally found only in a desktop computer including a huge 15.0" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display. Upgrade to the NP8560 Series for tomorrow's portable speed, built for you today.

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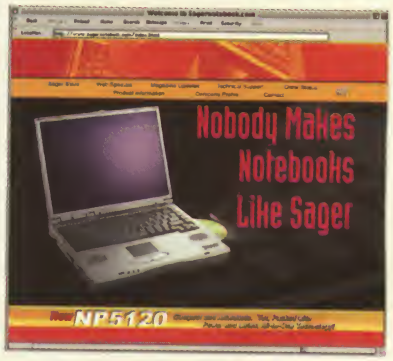

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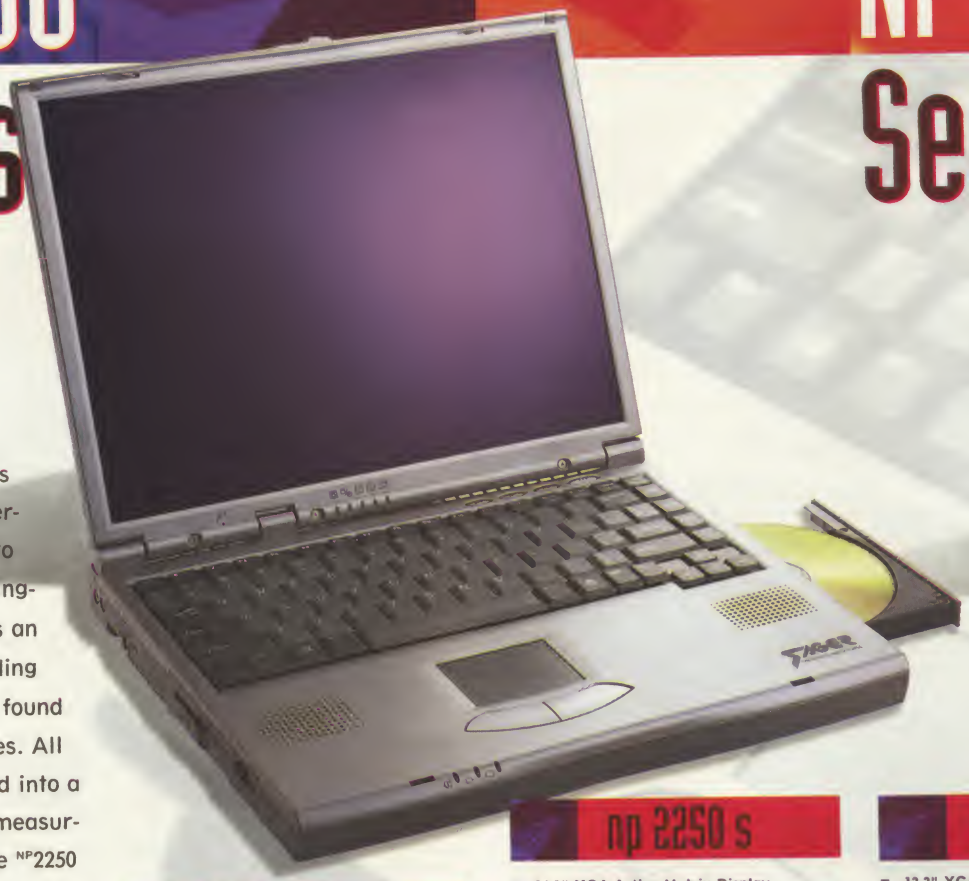
NP5120 Series



The new NP2250 Series from Sager is power-packed and ready to perform. This leading-edge notebook features an all-in-one design including advanced features not found in many other portables. All this and more is loaded into a beautiful, silver case measuring just 1.48" high. The NP2250 Series takes productivity and technology to the next level. With such a complete package, this is one solution you have to consider for any portable computing need.

np 2250 v

- 14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
- Mobile Pentium® III Processor 800MHz
- Integrated 4X AGP Graphics with 32MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
- 256MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 30.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 8X Max. DVD-ROM Drive[2]
- Integrated 56K V90 Modem[4] + 10/100 Ethernet
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
- 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 3D Surround Sound
- Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 2 USB Ports
- Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- A4 Size Windows® 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Deluxe Carrying Case
- Weight: 7.0 lbs with Battery
- 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1595

np 2250 s

- 14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
- Mobile Pentium® III Processor 600MHz
- Integrated 4X AGP Graphics with 32MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
- 256MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 20.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 24X Max. CD-ROM Drive[1]
- Integrated 56K V90 Modem[4] + 10/100 Ethernet
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
- 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 3D Surround Sound
- Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 2 USB Ports
- Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- A4 Size Windows® 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Deluxe Carrying Case
- Weight: 7.0 lbs with Battery
- 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1345

np 2250 c

- 13.3" XGA Active Matrix Display
- Mobile Pentium® III Processor 500MHz
- Integrated 4X AGP Graphics with 32MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
- 128MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 10.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 24X Max. CD-ROM Drive[1]
- Integrated 56K V90 Modem[4] + 10/100 Ethernet
- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
- 128KB On-Die L2 Cache
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 3D Surround Sound
- Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 2 USB Ports
- Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- A4 Size Windows® 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Deluxe Carrying Case
- Weight: 7.0 lbs with Battery
- 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

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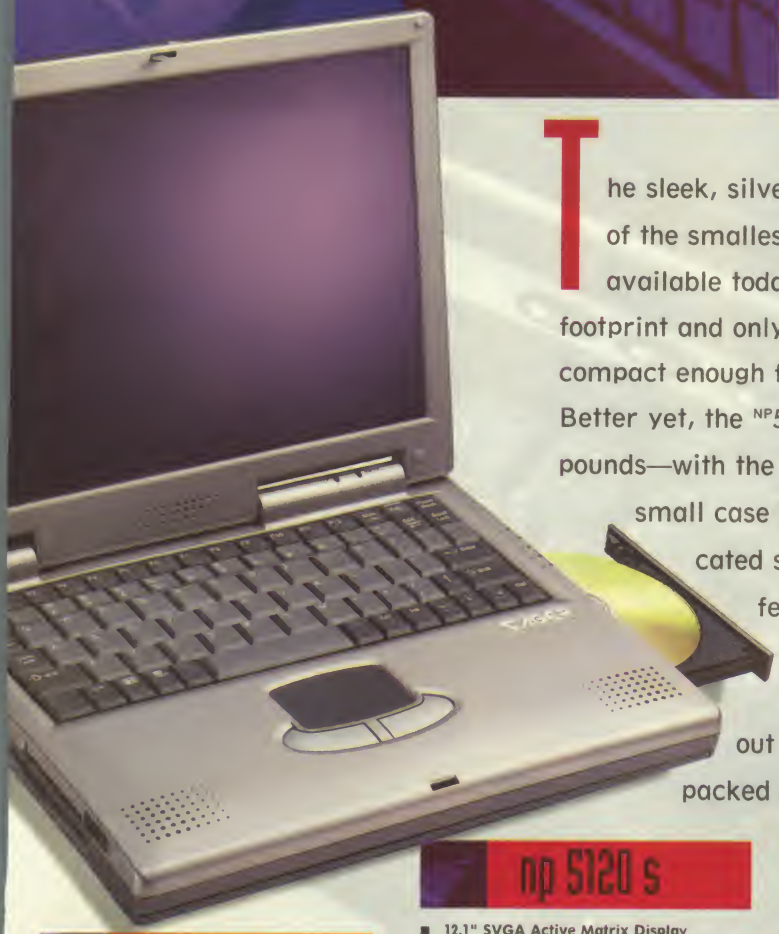

The sleek, silver-toned NP5120 Series is one of the smallest, yet powerful, notebooks available today. With an 11.0" x 9.4" footprint and only 1.6" high, this notebook is compact enough for demanding situations. Better yet, the NP5120 weighs in at only 6.6 pounds—with the battery! Packed into this small case is one of the most sophisticated systems available today featuring the latest technology for speed, graphics and performance. Check out the NP5120 Series power-packed configurations.

intel inside pentium®III

np 5120 v

- 12.1" SVGA Active Matrix Display
- Mobile Pentium® III Processor 800MHz
- 256MB SDRAM
- 20.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 8X Max. DVD-ROM Drive[3]
- Integrated 56K V90 Modem[4] + 10/100 Ethernet
- The Smallest All-In-One Design
- 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
- Integrated 4X AGP Graphics with 32MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 3D Surround Sound
- Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
- 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
- Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 1 Kensington Lock Port
- Other Ports: USB, 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- Windows® 95 Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Deluxe Carrying Case
- Weight: 6.6 lbs with Battery
- 11.0"w x 9.4"d x 1.6"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

$1395

np 5120 s

- 12.1" SVGA Active Matrix Display
- Mobile Pentium® III Processor 600MHz
- 256MB SDRAM
- 10.0GB Ultra DMA Hard Drive
- 24X Max. CD-ROM Drive[2]
- Integrated 56K V90 Modem[4] + 10/100 Ethernet
- The Smallest All-In-One Design
- 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
- Integrated 4X AGP Graphics with 32MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
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$1145

np 5120 c

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- Microsoft® Windows® XP Home Edition
- Deluxe Carrying Case
- Weight: 6.6 lbs with Battery
- 11.0"w x 9.4"d x 1.6"h
- Sager's Umbrella Protection Policy

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Options

- Car Adapter
- CD-RW Drive
- Port Replicator
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- 30-Day Money-Back Guarantee. If the equipment does not work as promised, or if you are not fully satisfied, we will issue a full refund upon the return of all original equipment.
- 48-Hour Repair Promise. For the first 30 days, we'll repair or replace your computer within 48 hours, and we'll pay the 2nd day air return shipping charge.
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Notes: 1, 2, 3: CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, and CD-RW drives list a variable read rate. CD-RW write and re-write speeds vary and list only the maximum possible speed. Actual CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, CD-RW speeds will vary and are often less than the maximum possible speed. 4: Maximum Transmission speed of up to 53Kps when downloading and 33.6Kps when uploading data. Actual speeds may vary depending on line conditions and current FCC restrictions.

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GR Series Notebooks

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The GR comes equipped with an i.LINK® (IEEE 1394)[3] Interface, Memory Stick® media, USB, and supports wireless LAN capabilities. Connect to an array of business-related peripherals to easily transfer and store all your audio, video, and data files. High connectivity means higher productivity.

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NET NOW

NET FILTERS GET PERSONAL

The Net has always been unruly. It's becoming less so as more Internet service providers (ISPs) arm subscribers with enhanced filtering tools to better control their online experience.

"Of ISPs that target consumers, 34 percent use some type of spam-filtering technology, and 30 percent use content filters," says Daryl Schoolar, a senior analyst with consulting company Cahners In-Stat.

In May, **America Online** *(www.aol.com)*, one of the pioneers in content filtering, beefed up its parental-control features by incorporating technology from **RuleSpace** *(www.rulespace.com)*. The new filter examines content in context, rather than simply searching for proscribed words.

But judging from the number of recently unveiled spam filters, junk e-mail seems to be the No. 1 concern among ISPs. In July, **Microsoft Network** *(www.msn.com)* took the wraps off of a new junk-mail blocker that lets you customize the level of protection. The technology, provided by **Brightmail** *(www.brightmail.com)*, lets you determine the types of mail you want to avoid; those messages are filtered to a separate folder, which may be sorted at your discretion.

Excite@Home *(www.excite@home.com)* started using Brightmail's opt-in spam-filtering technology earlier in the year. Although **NetZero** *(www.netzero.com)* has not implemented automatic filters, it does provide info on how to download filtering software.

Filtering is hardly a new concept, but Schoolar says it is interesting that most of these tools must be turned on by an ISP's subscribers. Though some users may feel empowered by being able to customize their filtering, Schoolar wonders if others will be left unprotected because they either don't know how to use the technologies or are unaware of them.

—Tamara Holmes

Program Your Pet

True artificial intelligence remains the stuff of science fiction, but the current generation of virtual pets and programmable machines at least approaches the promise of AI. And now you can download resources and software that let you enhance or alter your mechanical companions.

Sony AIBO owners will find plenty of compatriots on the Web. The AIBO Webring *(nav.webring.yahoo.com/hub?ring=aiboring)* is a good place to start. AiboSite *(www.aibosite.com)* provides an active message board, and AiboHack *(www.aibohack.com)* offers software downloads to directly monitor and control your AIBO. You'll also find tips for recording digital video from the AIBO's nose-mounted camera, and preprogrammed pet personalities you can download and install, giving your AIBO a brain transplant.

Those who would rather build robots than train them are probably familiar with Lego's Mindstorms, a series of kits and components you combine to make machines with an unlimited variety of senses, movements, and behaviors. Take a look at the Lego Mindstorms Webring *(nav.webring.yahoo.com/hub?ring=legoms)* to see what other tinkerers have wrought. Lego's own site *(mindstorms.lego.com)* contains user-submitted photos and descriptions of hundreds of fantastic creations.

Even if you own a virtual pet or robot of a more obscure breed, online resources can enhance your experience. Visit the Virtual Pet Home Page *(www.virtualpet.com/vp/vpindex2.htm)* for links to sites featuring a variety of digital creatures.

Get more from your AIBO.

—Kevin Shay

Retro Games Go PC

Nostalgic for when Pong was cool, Atari was awesome, and Pac-Man ruled the earth? A generation that spent untold hours with video games sometimes feels a sense of loss as classic games disappear and are replaced by PC gaming, consoles, and Game Boys.

Ardent arcaders can find relief in game emulators, which let you play video games intended for one platform on another. By combining the actual software coding of classic games (called ROMs) with an emulator, you can play the original arcade Space Invaders on your home computer. Since the late '90s, hobbyists have developed emulators, such as **MAME** *(www.mame.net)*, offering thousands of classic games for PCs, Macs, and even Pocket PCs.

Unfortunately, playing game ROMs may be illegal. Michael Ethetton, president of **Gambit Studios** *(www.gambitstudios.com)*, makers of the Liberty Game Boy emulator for Palm PDAs, says emulators are legal under certain conditions: "As long as they do not use any copyrighted code, and were developed using proper methods."

Nintendo, however, asserts in its FAQ addressing game emulators *(www.nintendo.com/corp/faqs/legal.html)* that ROMs of Nintendo games violate copyright laws: "The copyrights of games are valid even if the games are not found on store shelves, and using, copying, and/or distributing those games is a copyright infringement."

Some emulators, such as Liberty, try to sidestep the legal issues by developing clones similar to the original games, with titles like Pak-Man and Invaders From Space.

If you're uneasy about crossing the line between legal and illegal, you can find official releases of some classic games. **Microsoft** *(www.microsoft.com)* released the $34.95 Arcade PocketPak for the Pocket PC, which includes Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, and Dig Dug. **Infogrames** *(www.infogrames.com)*, owner of the entire Atari license, has released the Atari Anniversary Edition for the PC and Dreamcast. Infogrames has also contracted with other companies to develop Atari classics for handhelds and cell phones.

—Steven Abrams

*Promotional pricing established as of ad release date. Pricing may change due to market conditions.

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HOT GEAR

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EDITED BY BRIAN BENNETT

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HP DVD-Writer DVD100i Drive

What it is:
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Why buy:
Using the DVD+RW format, you can transfer analog or digital video directly to disc from a camcorder or VCR. Music lovers can store massive numbers of MP3 tunes on a single DVD disc, and business users can back up huge chunks of data easily.

Will it play in the family room?
You bet. The DVD+RW format ensures that the discs you burn are compatible with most DVD players living near the television. And, combined with the video-editing software bundled with the DVD-Writer, you'll be able to create and burn your own home epics. Watch out, Spielberg!

Speed reads:
The DVD100i writes CD-Rs at 12x speed, rewrites CD-RWs at 10x, and reads CDs at 32x. It reads DVDs at 8x and rewrites them at 2.4x. The drive is outfitted with an IDE/ATAPI interface and buffer-underrun-prevention technology to ensure you don't create unnecessary coasters.

Dollars and dealers:
Pick up a DVD100i for around $599 at retail outlets such as Circuit City, Best Buy, and CompUSA.

More data:
Hewlett-Packard, *www.hp.com*

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HOT GEAR

the Stuff you want

1

2

3

1 rapid transit

Shuffling pics from cam to computer is push-button-easy with Kodak's affordable **EasyShare DX3215 Zoom** *digital camera*. Using the EasyShare digital photography system and an optional USB-based cradle, simply slip the snapshooter into the dock, press a button, and let the included software take over. The entry-level DX3215 Zoom model sells for a just-say-yes price of $199 ($279.90 bundled with the cradle). You'll get 4x zoom capability, 8MB of internal memory, and a 1.3-megapixel CCD (1,280-by-960 resolution).

Kodak EasyShare DX3215 Zoom
Eastman Kodak
www.kodak.com
34824

2 why wear wires?

You pity those pedestrians wandering the streets, lost in animated conversation with themselves—until you notice the wire and realize they're using a cell-phone headset. Now cell-phone users can *really* look crazy with the $149 **Bluetooth Wireless Headset** from Motorola. There's no phone-to-headset cord to give them away, and the device is compatible with most Bluetooth-enabled phones. It features comfortable over-the-ear construction, weighs less than an ounce, and delivers up to 3 hours of talk time. You recharge it on the same cradle you use for your Motorola phone. Crazy? Crazy like a fox!

Motorola Bluetooth Wireless Headset
Motorola
www.motorola.com
34827

3 gigs a go-go

Grab a USB-based **DrivePak** external hard drive from SimpleTech, and you *can* take it with you. That's what makes this eminently portable 13-ounce hard drive irresistible for those who travel with digital images, MP3 tunes, and video clips. The DrivePak is plug-and-play simple to install and delivers more gigabytes per dollar than the popular Zip drives. Available in transparent gray, the 30GB DrivePak costs $499.89 after rebate, while a 10GB model prices out at $207.15 after rebate. You can also go with 6GB and 20GB models.

SimpleTech DrivePak
SimpleTech
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4 mini music marvel

If you don't leave home without hours of digital tunes, you're probably tired of shelling out for expensive flash-memory cards to stow your MP3s. Why not go the mini-CD-R route with the new $129.99 **TEAC Mini CD/MP3 Player?** Simply download MP3 files or compress your favorite CDs, rip a quick 3-inch mini-CD-R on your desktop's CD burner, and tote up to 3.5 hours of music with you on each $2 disc. The unit uses standard AA batteries, ships with in-ear headphones, and weighs less than 6 ounces.

TEAC Mini CD/MP3 Player
TEAC
www.teac.com
34826

5 video in hand

Sophisticated features are fused with ease of use in the **Digital Palmcorder** camcorders from Panasonic. The $999.95 **PV-DV701** model serves as both a video and digital still camera, outfitted with a 3.5-inch color monitor, internal image-stabilization technology, a three-way PC link, 10x zoom, IEEE 1394 (FireWire) connectivity, and a Secure Digital (SD) memory-card slot. (An 8MB card is included.) The slightly less expensive **PV-DV351** is virtually identical, but it has a smaller screen and lacks both an analog-in port and an IR remote control.

Panasonic Digital Palmcorder PV-DV701
Panasonic
www.panasonic.com/electronics
34829

6 hubba hub

Now you can connect multiple USB peripherals to your PC without creating a snake's nest of cables all over your desk. The stylish $79.99 **xHub4 Plus** from Adaptec serves up four USB 2.0 ports, ships with a 6-foot USB cable, and, best of all, corrals cables with a rubberized steel stand that keeps wires in check. Four LEDs correspond to peripherals, so you always know which are connected. And you can customize the faceplate of the xHub4 Plus with your own photo.

Adaptec xHub4 Plus
Adaptec
www.adaptec.com
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4

5

6

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- Embedded Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI Controller
- 3-Yr NBD Bronze On-Site Service,[3] 7x24 Phone Tech Support

$999 Business Loan: **$27**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 10229-291009

Recommended upgrade:
- MS® Windows® 2000 Server, add $799

PowerEdge™ 2500SC Server

NEW Affordable Scalability Server
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 933MHz
- Dual Processor Capable
- 128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM
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- Embedded Intel® 10/100 NIC
- Dual Integrated Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI Controllers
- Hot-Swap, Redundant Cooling Fans
- 3-Yr NBD Bronze On-Site Service,[3] 7x24 Phone Tech Support

$1499 Business Loan: **$40**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 10229-291014

Recommended upgrades:
- Redundant Power, add $189
- Embedded Dual-Channel RAID, add $299

PowerEdge™ 2500SC Server

NEW Affordable Scalability Server
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.0GHz
- Dual Processor Capable
- 128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM
- 2x18GB[5] (10K RPM) Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI HD
- Hot-Swap, Redundant Power Supplies
- Embedded Intel® 10/100 NIC
- Dual Integrated Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI Controllers
- Hot-Swap, Redundant Cooling Fans
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$1999 Business Loan: **$53**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
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Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter

DESKTOPS

Alienware Area 51

The Area 51 has everything you'd expect from a top-tier gaming machine, but what really impressed us was the incredible attention Alienware paid to even the smallest details when creating this powerhouse PC.

REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
Alienware • *www.alienware.com*
Direct Price: $3,499 34637

NuTrend Duron Power 2

NuTrend's Duron Power 2 is inexpensive at $899, but there's nothing cheap about its components. The 950MHz Duron system comes loaded with a CD-RW drive, a 16x DVD drive, and a 17-inch CRT. Penny-wise PC or powerhouse? It's a little of both.

REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
NuTrend Computer • *www.nutrend.com*
Direct Price: $899 34793

Voodoo Monsoon EGAD-DDR

This fully loaded 1.4GHz Athlon-based system is not only one of the fastest PCs we've ever tested (besting even a 1.8GHz Pentium 4) but also one of the most stylish, with a transparent window that shows off this speed demon's premium innards.

SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 66.
Voodoo Computers • *www.voodoopc.com*
Direct Price: $3,957 34816

Voodoo Monsoon EGAD-DDR

NETWORKS

SOHOware NetBlaster II Wireless Network Kit Combo Version

Looking for a reliable, simple wireless networking solution? Check out the SOHOware Network Kit. It's competitively priced, maintains strong signal strength, and is easy to install in both desktops and notebooks.

REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
SOHOware • *www.sohoware.com*
Direct Price: $549.99 34711

HARDWARE

Fujifilm FinePix 6800 Zoom

A sleekly designed 3.3-megapixel camera, the Fujifilm FinePix 6800 Zoom aims to keep you snap-happy with a robust feature

set and the ability to capture 160 seconds of audio-enhanced video.

REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
Fujifilm • *www.fujifilm.com*
Mfr. Est. Price: $899 34702

Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter

Balancing price and performance in inkjet printers can be perplexing, but Lexmark's Z53 makes it simple. That's because this inkjet produces text and images at levels far exceeding its cost—an enticingly low $139.

REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
Lexmark International
www.lexmark.com
Direct Price: $139 34701

Pacific Digital TurboWriter 121032ei

The TurboWriter's FileCD utility undermined its performance, but this CD-RW drive still had the fastest disc-read score in our roundup. It also boasts a terrific $149 price and includes buffer-underrun protection.

REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
Pacific Digital • *www.1pdc.com*
Direct Price: $149 34616

Polk Audio AMR150

A four-channel multimedia speaker system, Polk's AMR150 rivals the sound quality of home audio speakers with accurate highs, powerful lows, and mellow middle frequencies.

REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
Polk Audio • *www.polkaudio.com*
Direct Price: $149.95 34602

Sony Spressa CRX200E/A1

If you're not yet ready to invest in a pricey DVD-R drive, check out Sony's Spressa CRX200E/A1. It's a fast, inexpensive 12x/8x/32x CD-RW drive that can also burn double-density discs that hold up to 1.3GB of data.

REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
Sony Electronics
www.sony.com/spressa
Direct Price: $199.99 34708

Western Digital Caviar WD1000BB

One of the first 100GB hard drives to hit the market, the Caviar WD1000BB trounces its competition with a 7,200rpm spin rate that lets it deliver faster performance at an equivalent price.

SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 76.
Western Digital
www.westerndigital.com
Direct Price: $299 34809

Western Digital Caviar WD1000BB

GAMES

Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal

Even as an expansion pack, Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal lives up to its amazing predecessors, adding three new levels and

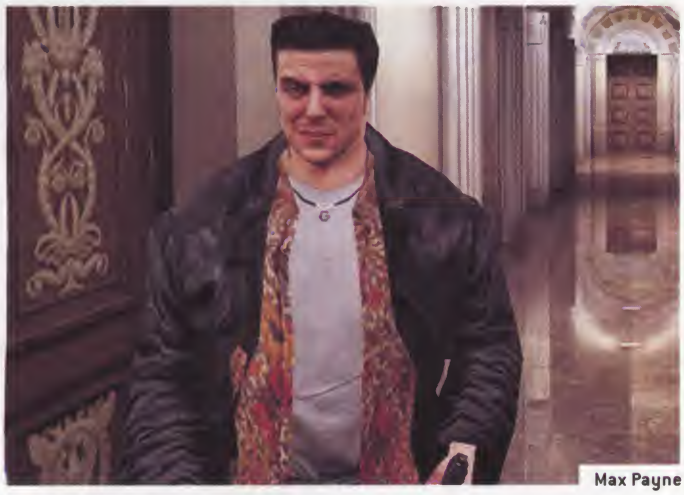
hours of gameplay, then wrapping it up with a bittersweet ending.
REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
Interplay Entertainment
www.interplay.com
Direct Price: $29.95 34718

Emperor: Battle for Dune

It won't revolutionize the real-time strategy genre, but Emperor: Battle for Dune is a highly enjoyable game that emphasizes fast, intense skirmishes and has lots of replay value thanks to its three single-player modes and satisfying multiplayer features.
REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
Westwood Studios
www.westwood.ea.com
Direct Price: $49.95 34635

Max Payne

Max Payne is a third-person shooter game that never ceases to amaze. From its outstanding gameplay to its innovative "bullet-time," which lets you watch stray bullets fly by in slow motion, the only pain you'll feel is when you finish.
SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 100.
GodGames • *www.maxpayne.com*
Mfr. Est. Price: $49.99 34769



Max Payne

MOBILE

Casio Cassiopeia Fiva MPC-206E

Delivering a full Windows Me experience in a footprint smaller than the size of a sheet of paper, the Cassiopeia Fiva MPC-206E is no computational juggernaut, but its

600MHz Crusoe processor lets it keep up with most Windows applications while gently sipping power from its battery.
SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 78.
Casio • *www.casio4business.com*
Direct Price: $1,999 34820

Gateway Solo 3450

If you're looking for desktop-replacement performance in an ultralight package, look no further than the $2,449 Gateway Solo 3450, a notebook-and-dock combination that comes fully equipped with more than enough features to satisfy even the choosiest users.
SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 92.
Gateway • *www.gateway.com*
Direct Price: $2,449 34822

HandEra 330

Although it's no beauty, the Palm OS-based HandEra 330 delivers several innovations to the Palm platform, including a display that can flip between portrait and landscape modes and a flexible interface that supports both CompactFlash and Secure Digital media.
REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
HandEra • *www.handera.com*
Direct Price: $349.99 34738

Final Cut Pro 2

SOFTWARE

Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition

Defragging your computer's hard drive is essential to keeping your system in top shape, and this version of Diskeeper 6.0 gives you the tools to do just that. With its improved algorithms and automated scheduling, this package makes system maintenance a joy.
SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 96.
Executive Software International
www.execsoft.com
Direct Price: $49.95 (boxed); $44.95 (download) 34752

Final Cut Pro 2

An incredible video-editing value, Apple's $999 Final Cut Pro 2 delivers sophisticated tools, including a Media Manager and media-browsing capabilities, that put it on a level with professional editing software that costs thousands more.
REVIEWED IN OCTOBER ISSUE
Apple Computer
www.apple.com/finalcutpro
Direct Price: $999 (full version); $249 (upgrade) 34733

FineReader 5.0 Pro

Inexpensive and easy to use, FineReader 5.0 Pro moves to the head of the OCR class. In addition to its outstanding character-recognition capabilities, it offers fully automated features, multiple options for saving in Acrobat PDF format, and an interactive spell-checker.
SEE THIS MONTH'S REVIEW ON P. 98.
ABBYY U.S.A. Software House
www.abbyyusa.com
Direct Price: $99 34772

PC Upgrade Commander

If you're planning to migrate applications, data, and settings from one computer system to another, don't think of doing it without PC Upgrade Commander, a handy piece of software that lets you upgrade with ease.
REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
V Communications • *www.v-com.com*
Direct Price: $49.95 (boxed); $39.95 (download) 34601

Pinnacle Studio DV

Digital-camcorder owners will want to plug in to Pinnacle Studio DV, a DV-only video editor that comes bundled with an IEEE 1394 (FireWire) interface board. The package combines a broad range of functions, such as the ability to capture and edit lower-quality video, with an outstanding interface.
REVIEWED IN SEPTEMBER ISSUE
Pinnacle Systems
www.pinnaclesys.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $89 34633

Gateway Solo 3450

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PS3000

AMD Duron™ Processor at 900 MHz

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- 40 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 56X CD-ROM
- Trident Blade 3D Shared AGP
- Motorola PCI 56K V.90 Voice Modem
- PCI 3D Wavetable Stereo Sound
- MLI 120W PMPO Speakers
- 350W AMD Certified Power Supply

AMD Duron™ Processor	
950 MHz	$479 A1B02
1.0 GHz	$489 A1B03
1.1 GHz	$499 A1B04
AMD Thunderbird™ w/Enhanced Cache Processor	
1.2 GHz (266MHz)	$509 A1B05
1.3 GHz (266MHz)	$519 A1B06
1.4 GHz (266MHz)	$529 A1B07
AMD Athlon XP Processor	
1800	$589 A1B08

$799 A3B05

PS8000

Athlon w/Enhanced Cache at 1.2 GHz

- New VIA KT266A DDR Chipset
- 200/266MHz FSB and UDMA-100 Support
- DDR PC1600/2100 and 4X AGP Support
- 256MB PC2100 (266MHz) DDR RAM
- 40 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 16X DVD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 3 200 3D DVD 64MB DDR
- Motorola PCI 56K V.90 Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster PCI 128 4-Channel 3D Wavetable
- MLI-452 4.1 Ch Speakers w/Subwoofer
- 350W AMD Certified Power Supply

AMD Duron™ Processor	
900 MHz	$749 A3B01
950 MHz	$759 A3B02
1.0 GHz	$779 A3B03
1.1 GHz	$789 A3B04
AMD Thunderbird™ w/Enhanced Cache Processor	
1.3 GHz (266MHz)	$809 A3B06
1.4 GHz (266MHz)	$819 A3B07
AMD XP Processor	
1800	$869 A3B08

$699 A4B07

AS6000

Athlon™ w/Enhanced Cache at 1.4 GHz

- AMD Thunderbird/Duron Ready
- 200/266MHz FSB and UDMA-100 Support
- VIA KT133A PC-133 and 4X AGP Support
- 256MB PC-133 SDRAM
- 60 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 16X DVD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 2 MX400 DVD 3D 64MB
- Creative Labs Modem Blaster PCI Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster SB16 128V PCI 3D Wavetable
- Atlas 440W 2.1 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- 350W AMD Certified Power Supply

AMD Duron™ Processor	
900 MHz	$629 A4B01
950 MHz	$639 A4B02
1.0 GHz	$659 A4B03
1.1 GHz	$669 A4B04
AMD Thunderbird™ w/Enhanced Cache Processor	
1.2 GHz (266MHz)	$679 A4B05
1.3 GHz (266MHz)	$689 A4B06
AMD Athlon XP Processor	
1800	$749 A4B08

$1,159 A3B05

AS8000

AMD Athlon XP 1800

- New VIA KT266A DDR Chipset
- 200/266MHz FSB and UDMA-100 Support
- DDR PC1600/2100 and 4X AGP Support
- 256MB PC2100 (266MHz) DDR RAM
- 60 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 16X DVD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 3 500 3D DVD 64MB DDR
- Creative Labs Modem Blaster PCI Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster Audigy 5.1 Sound w/SB1394 Firewire port
- Creative Labs Desktop Theater 5.1 DTT5300
- Microsoft Intelli Internet Keyboard
- Microsoft Intelli Mouse w/Wheel
- 350W AMD Certified Power Supply

AMD Duron™ Processor	
900 MHz	$1,039 A5B01
950 MHz	$1,049 A5B02
1.0 GHz	$1,059 A5B03
1.1 GHz	$1,069 A5B04
AMD Thunderbird™ w/Enhanced Cache Processor	
1.2 GHz (266MHz)	$1,079 A5B05
1.3 GHz (266MHz)	$1,089 A5B06
1.4 GHz (266MHz)	$1,099 A5B07

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Cyclone 7D	$199
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There should be a picture in the dictionary of the Atlas Micro XS5000 under the heading "Price/Performance." This desktop system was one of the best performers we've ever seen. Yet, it costs about $1,000 less than the other high-end Athlon desktops reviewed here.

Mr. David English

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MS8000

Via Cyrix C3 Processor at 750 MHz

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- 40 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 56X CD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 2 MX DVD 3D 32MB
- Motorola PCI 56K V.90 Voice Modem
- PCI 3D Wavetable Stereo Sound
- MLI 120W PMPO Speakers

$709 S2B01

CS9000

Intel Pentium IV Processor at 1.5 GHz

- New Pentium IV DDR Motherboard
- 400MHz FSB and UDMA-100 Support
- DDR PC1600/2100 and 4X AGP Support
- 256MB PC2100 (266MHz) DDR RAM
- 60 GB UDMA Hard Drive
- 56X CD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 2 MX400 DVD 3D 64MB
- Motorola PCI 56K V.90 Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster SB16 128V PCI 3D Wavetable
- Atlas 440W 2.1 Speakers w/Subwoofer

$899 S5B01

GS8000

Intel Pentium IV Processor at 1.5 GHz

- New Pentium IV DDR Motherboard
- 400MHz FSB and UDMA-100 Support
- DDR PC1600/2100 and 4X AGP Support
- 256MB PC2100 (266MHz) DDR RAM
- 40 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
- 16X DVD-ROM
- Nvidia GEFORCE 3 200 3D DVD 64MB DDR
- Creative Labs Modem Blaster PCI Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster PCI 128 4-Channel 3D Wavetable
- Altec Lansing AVS500 4.1 Ch Spkrs w/Subwoofer
- Microsoft Intelli Internet Keyboard
- Microsoft Intelli Mouse w/Wheel

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GS9000

Intel Pentium IV Processor at 1.7 GHz

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- 256MB PC-800 Rambus RAM
- 60 GB UDMA-100 Hard Drive
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- Nvidia GEFORCE 3 500 3D DVD 64MB DDR
- Creative Labs Modem Blaster PCI Voice Modem
- SoundBlaster Audigy 5.1 Sound w/SB1394 Firewire port
- Creative Labs Desktop Theater 5.1 DTT5300
- Microsoft Intelli Internet Keyboard
- Microsoft Intelli Mouse w/Wheel

Via Cyrix C3 Processor

800 MHz	$499 S3B02

Pentium iii Coppermine Processor

850 MHz	$589 S3B03
866 MHz	$599 S3B04
933 MHz	$619 S3B05
1.0 GHz	$629 S3B06

Intel Pentium IV Processor

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1.8 GHz	$ 829 S2B03
1.9 GHz	$ 949 S2B04
2.0 GHz	$1,139 S2B05

Intel Pentium IV Processor

1.7 GHz	$ 959 S5B02
1.8 GHz	$1,019 S5B03
1.9 GHz	$1,139 S5B04
2.0 GHz	$1,329 S5B05

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2.0 GHz	$1,649 S6B05

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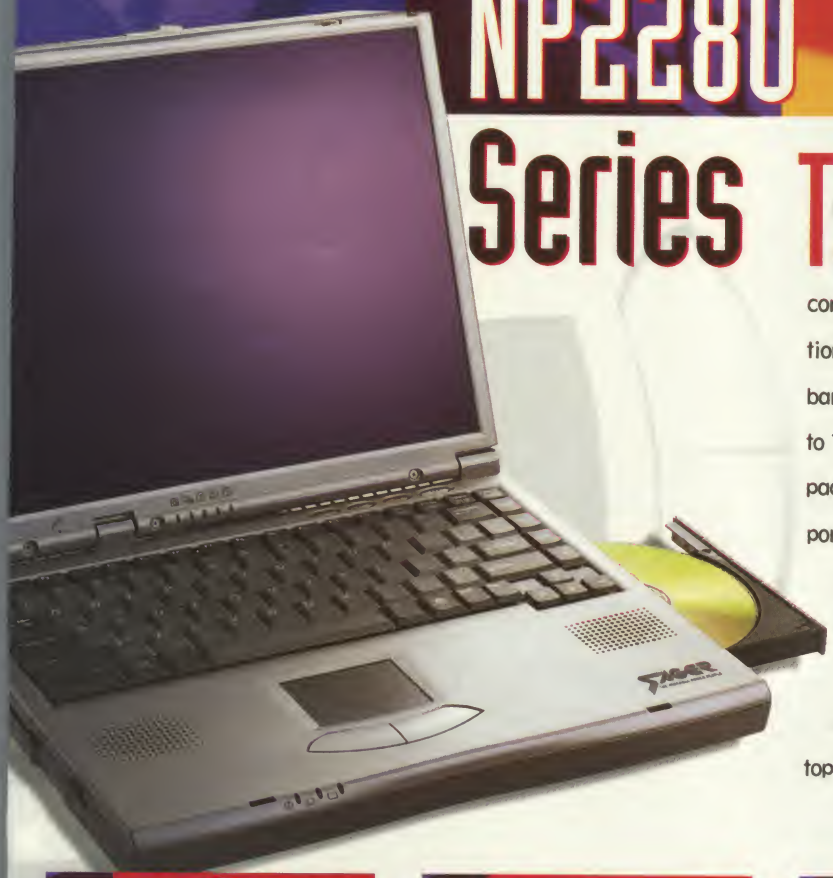

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- 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
- 512KB On-Die L2 Cache
- 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive
- 3D Surround Sound
- Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
- Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
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- Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
- 1 IEEE-1394 Port
- Other Ports: 2 USB, 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
- *A4 Size Windows® 95 Keyboard*
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JOHN BLACKFORD

The Reinvention Of Software

Microsoft wants to transform software into a service delivered via the Web and rented by the month.

IT'S IRONIC THAT SOFTWARE IS TYPICALLY SOLD AS A PHYSICAL product, code stored on floppy disks or CD-ROMs inside a shrink-wrapped box. Within five years, that method will be as quaintly out of date as the horse and buggy.

The idea of software as a service dates from 1998, when Oracle's Larry Ellison and Sun's Scott McNealy began touting Web-based services as an alternative to traditional software. Applications delivered via the Web weren't ready for prime time then, but key ingredients now falling into place include widely available broadband connections, universal Internet standards, modular reusable code, and inexpensive processing power and storage capacity.

Perhaps as important is the commitment by Microsoft to its broad-based .Net initiative. Microsoft officials have stated they are "betting the company" on .Net and software as a service. A quick look at its business position reveals the reason. For years, Microsoft's Windows operating system and Office suite evolved in parallel with PCs. Every few years users would snatch up the latest versions of its software, generating a huge revenue stream since nearly every PC ran Windows, and most owners of PCs and Macs used Office.

As the PC industry matures, users are holding onto PCs and applications much longer. Without a new approach, Microsoft and other technology companies face longer cycles between upgrades, and, eventually, declining revenues. Microsoft's initial response was to attach its monopoly operating system to the Web by tying Internet Explorer to Windows.

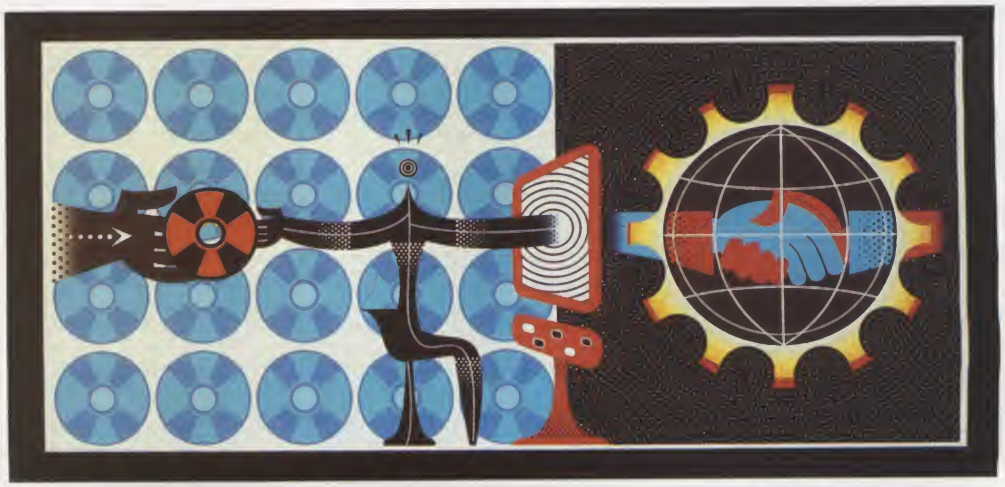

ILLUSTRATION BY CAMPBELL LAIRD/SIS

AN ERA OF ENDLESS UPGRADES

Microsoft's next, and more ambitious, step will ultimately convert its applications and operating system into a set of services delivered via the Web and sold by subscription. The pluses for users are that upgrades and patches will be free and automatic, and customers may be able to pay only for the application components they use, possibly based on frequency of use.

Microsoft, in turn, will flatten its revenue stream and ensure that all users run the same versions of its products. This automatic-upgrade aspect may prove nettlesome because users and businesses may not want Microsoft to control the pace of their upgrades, especially given .Net's proprietary aspects. If Microsoft rolled out an "improved" proprietary version of XML (a supposedly open standard), its customers would be switched to the new version, like it or not.

Of course, users could download and install utilities to handle other vendors' XML code, but that would be inconvenient. While Microsoft does recognize many core Web standards—such as SOAP, UDDI, and even XML—it is pushing hard toward its particular implementations.

The addition of Internet Explorer to Windows was modest compared with the changes in store with Windows XP. To "activate" the OS, users must let the software generate a 50-digit code, then pass that code to Microsoft, which in turn generates an activation code for the PC. Forget about running the same version of XP on both your PC and notebook—only one device per license is permitted. If XP concludes wrongly that you have installed it onto a different PC (for example, after you replace a graphics card and hard drive), you may have to reactivate.

The easiest way to handle the activation process is to sign up for Passport, Microsoft's authentication service, which will remember passwords and other information for a multitude of Web sites, easing browsing, shopping, and activation. Besides pushing you toward Passport, XP will nudge you to join its (fee-based) MSN service, periodically announcing that you haven't signed up yet.

So the good news is that Microsoft is incorporating a host of useful services and technologies into its products, while the other news is that it's begun directing the same "gloves off" attitude toward consumers its industry "partners" have long faced. The question is: Will Microsoft's proven genius at building software and promoting its use, combined with increasingly high-pressure tactics, help or hinder the shift from software as a product to a set of rented Web services?

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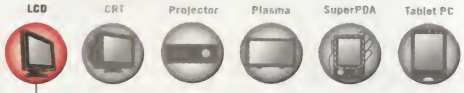

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JOHN C. DVORAK

Design Engine Drives Progress

Microsoft is selling form over function with its newest operating-system release.

THE ROLLOUT OF WINDOWS XP IS BRINGING A DISTINCT shift in OS marketing from functionality to form. If Windows XP is to be a success, and I believe it will, it will be because it's jazzy and cool-looking, not because it's better than Windows 98 in some functional way.

Microsoft has done very little to its OS since Windows 95 other than to jazz it up and recompile it in hopes of lessening fatal crashes. The crashing has continued in various forms, and I suspect once Windows XP gets into the wild, it will crash just as often. Windows 2000 has a grand reputation for fewer crashes, but it can get into a funk and begin a string of crashes just like everything else from Microsoft.

The process of bug removal is so slow that Microsoft needs to build better-looking products to sustain sales. Hence, XP.

Maybe the truth is Microsoft isn't capable of building a crash-proof system. The closest it came was when it was involved with OS/2, which was as close to crash-proof as we've seen. But the company must not consider crash-proofing a priority because it's not a moneymaker. Besides, Microsoft knows most computer users seldom install more than four applications in addition to some version of Microsoft Office. If you leave the machine alone it tends to run fine.

I'm always amused by the letters I get when I complain about crashes. There's always the fellow who's been running Windows 95 or 98 since it came out and hasn't experienced a crash. This, to me, is like the guy with the obedient dog that calmly waits without a leash outside a store for its master. You wonder how the master ever got it to be so patient and calm. It's a fluke, that's for sure. Just like the Windows system that's never crashed. But I digress.

Since Windows 95, Microsoft has made the OS look better and better. Windows XP is just plain gorgeous. You really think you're getting something for your money with this thing running. And the company manages to do this without making the GUI too "Barbie"-esque, the way Apple did with its first toilet-seat-shaped iBook. Apple, which started the GUI wars, has a cool-looking interface in its new OS X. Some years ago, Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO, made a public pronouncement that Microsoft had "no taste," and the company has done its best to prove Jobs wrong.

In the process, Microsoft must have noticed the OS does everything it needs to do, and that improvements would be incremental and mere "fixes" if it didn't get on a new track. And that new track is pure design.

A similar phenomenon occurred in the automobile industry. Once the car was perfected, changes were hardly enough to persuade consumers to buy newer models. Along came design. The heyday of auto design was from 1954 to 1967, when each model year featured an entirely new design. Many new models didn't even look like they came from the same manufacturer. And for a couple of years, they even turned the popular two-tone car (painted with two distinct colors) into a three-tone car. This had to be much more grueling than the two-year burst of activity during the Internet bubble.

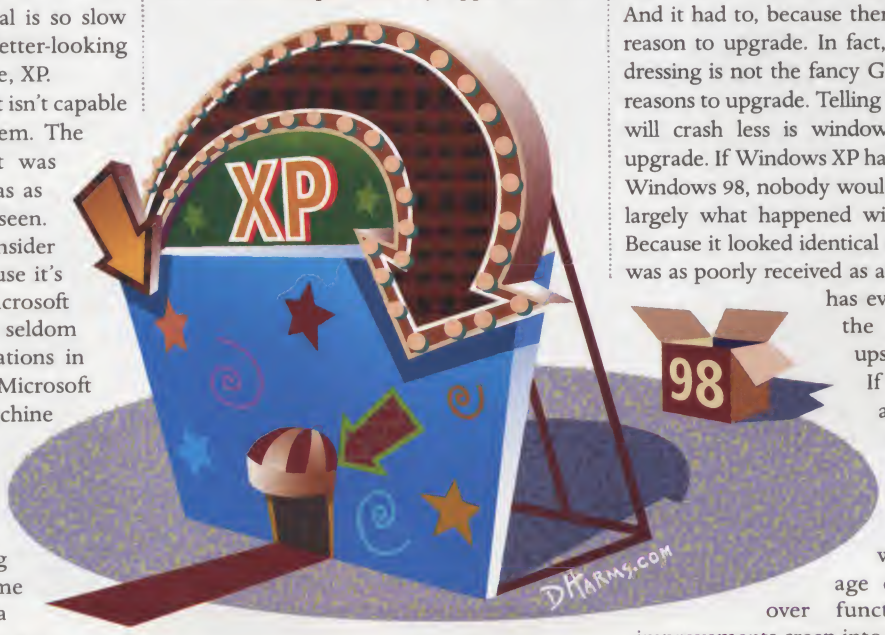

ILLUSTRATION BY DENNIS HARMS

JUST A PRETTY INTERFACE

Although the idea of a jazzy-looking computer box comes and goes, the jazzy OS is fairly new. You couldn't make a command-line OS jazzy, no matter what you did. And because Microsoft began in that era, it took the company a long time to figure out that it could make the GUI look stunning if it wanted to. And it had to, because there is no other real reason to upgrade. In fact, the real window dressing is not the fancy GUI, but the bogus reasons to upgrade. Telling people the system will crash less is window dressing for an upgrade. If Windows XP had the same GUI as Windows 98, nobody would upgrade. This is largely what happened with Windows Me. Because it looked identical to Windows 98, it was as poorly received as anything Microsoft has ever done. I'm sure the company was upset by the reaction. If Windows Me was as pretty as XP, reviewers would have overlooked its faults.

The fact is, we're entering an age of design—form over function. Curiously, improvements creep into the OS this way. I always like to get people who are used to the newer GUI to attempt to use Windows 3.1 running on an older machine. It's like driving a car from the 1930s—uncomfortable and difficult. Cars did, in fact, get better, not just prettier, but it was design that made things move forward.

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> 2 USB Ports
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On the Trail Of the Elusive Coupon

Bargain sites keep the spirit of the great online deal alive.

IF YOU'RE A DEDICATED ONLINE BARGAIN HUNTER LIKE ME, you're already making your holiday purchases to ensure on-time shipping. And if you've been doing this for a while, you're likely telling stories about that last great online deal at the end of last century the way aging pioneers spoke of the disappearing American bison 100 years ago.

Today, online coupons no longer run wild on the Net: They live on in captivity, tamed by e-tailers to do their bidding and trotted out on command to serve select customers. But there are still places where the savings feel a little wilder, even though the radical deals are rare. Dozens of sites aggregate coupon links and codes, or provide discussion forums where consumers can share deals with others.

Sites such as FatWallet.Com, PromoCode.com, and ShoppingBookmarks.com charge e-tailers a percentage of the selling price whenever someone makes a purchase through their links. Many site operators, including FatWallet.Com's Tim Storm and ShoppingBookmarks.com's Kim Fowley, started as hobbyists. Others, such as PromoCode.com's Ryan Phelan, came from corporate America. These sites are often one- or two-person shops with no venture-capital funding. Many are profitable.

UGLY BUT EFFECTIVE

The first thing you notice about bargain sites is that they get right to the point. Most simply list coupon links. Some, such as FatWallet.Com, include message boards where consumers can discuss deals. Others, such as PromoCode.com, provide e-mail updates whenever coupons appear from your favorite e-tailers.

What little actual written content you find is amateurish and quirky, but for those who can remember the days when people simply used the Internet as a means of communication, the candor, personality, and downright passion of these sites is refreshing.

"We research our purchases," Storm writes in FatWallet.Com's help section. "We will share our experiences with others. What we say to one another is more important than any million-dollar Super Bowl commercial, gimmick, or free T-shirt." A little further down, he writes, "Oh, yeah, the enemy? ...Anyone who gets in our way."

Storm's "tech-savvy early adopters and hard-core Internet shoppers," as he calls them, can certainly wield power. It was from disgruntled customers among FatWallet.Com's 13,000 registered users that many reporters learned Amazon.com had raised prices during its buy-two, get-free-shipping deal last summer. Similarly, boards such as FatWallet.Com's revealed you could add *The Book of Hope* to your basket for $1 to meet your second-item requirement.

This may sound like the kind of overhunting that drove bargains to near-extinction in the first place. But there's a conservation ethic among bargain-site owners.

Echoing the sentiments of other owners who remove inappropriate links at the request of merchants, Storm says, "I will be the merchant's bullhorn and post the official policy about a forbidden coupon prominently."

"All of my codes and deals are verified before posting," Fowley says.

FRIEND OR FOE?

Although these bargain sites claim merchants regularly contact them to promote coupons, high-profile e-tailers from Buy.com to Staples.com have rejected orders from customers using coupons from bargain-hunter sites. In the most unusual case, Spiegel charged some customers' credit cards months after delivering goods and denied future orders, claiming coupon abuse. Insisting its customers are "really loyal," Spiegel says it doesn't expect excessive coupon users to become long-term customers.

Rubbish, Storm says. "I've taken advantage of offers that seem too good to be true, and if I have a positive experience, I go back," he says. "If I go to Wal-Mart and buy an item that's mismarked, they don't call me up later and say, 'Gosh darn it, we're going to have to charge you more.'"

Phelan, who aspires to private-label PromoCode.com's coupon database on other sites (Yes-It's-Free.com and Freeze.com are the first partners), says merchants should view legitimate affiliate marketing sites as the online equivalents of Sunday ad circulars.

"While there are a lot of crappy sites out there that won't cooperate when you want to remove a code, there are a lot of other sites that are good, and that user base can drive sales," he says.

Both Storm and Phelan praise Amazon.com—the e-tailer credited with starting the online-affiliate craze—for providing separate codes for general distribution in exchange for *promises not to* post codes intended for specific customers. This way, Amazon can market the way it wants while tracking the success of different channels.

Why should merchants make the effort? Storm surveyed users last holiday season to determine how many online purchases they'd made in the past 30 days. A full 30 percent made an impressive six to 10 purchases, 9 percent made 11 to 20, and a whopping 18 percent bought 20 or more times. This is a sure indication bargain hunters may be willing to saddle up for the hunt once again.

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DESKTOPS

APPLE POWER MAC G4

Essential Power For Graphics Pros

BEFORE HARDWARE OR SOFTWARE IS RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC, IT'S generally given an internal code name by the manufacturer. If ever a code name was completely appropriate, it's the one for Apple's new G4 towers: Quicksilver.

The latest G4s come in three flavors. A 733MHz model now occupies the low end of the product line at $1,699, and a $3,499 dual-processor 800MHz model perches on top. Between them lies the model we looked at, the $2,499 867MHz Power Mac G4. Note that these prices don't include a monitor; our test system came with Apple's new $999 17-inch Studio Display flat panel, a stunning LCD, bringing our total system price to $3,498 direct.

All of the new towers ship with nVidia's 32MB GeForce2 MX graphics card. Although it's not the top end of nVidia's line, the GeForce2 MX is a solid performer for graphics apps and games that are motion- and animation-intensive.

As expected, the system is faster than most previous Power Macs. Our 867MHz test unit ships with 2MB of Level 3 cache, which supplies a significant boost in performance for cache-intensive applications. Also, it uses a 7,200rpm Ultra ATA/100 hard drive, as well as 128MB of PC133 RAM, rather than PC100.

In our Adobe Photoshop tests, the 867MHz G4 ran neck and neck with last year's 500MHz dual-processor G4 model, but it took almost a minute longer to complete its Photoshop tasks than the last-generation 733MHz G4 system. That's because both of these previous-generation systems had 256MB of RAM, in contrast to the 867MHz's 128MB, and Photoshop performance is more sensitive to memory bottlenecks than CPU bottlenecks. Quake III performance hardly varies with the increase in CPU speed, and it still can't compete with, say, a 900MHz Duron PC using the same graphics card.

Apple has replaced the external speakers of the older G4s with a built-in Harman Kardon speaker, the same one used in the spherical Pro Speakers that shipped with the G4 Cube. This arrangement is no substitute for a good set of external speakers with a subwoofer, but it is a distinct improvement and should be more than sufficient for users with basic sound needs.

All three of the new G4 models come with a standard complement of ports: Gigabit Ethernet, IEEE 1394 (FireWire), USB, and 56kbps modem. The $1,699 733MHz model ships with Apple's standard CD-RW drive (the reason Apple could offer the system at such a low price), but the upper two models ship with the SuperDrive, a combo DVD-R/CD-RW drive that lets you use Apple's included iDVD software to create DVDs playable in consumer DVD players.

At press time, our system came with Mac OS 9.2 and Mac OS X 10.0.4 preinstalled on the hard drive. While running OS 9.2, the system feels incredibly responsive. Under 10.0.4, it feels sluggish, proving that if you're running a slow OS, it doesn't matter which machine you run it on. We suggest waiting for the forthcoming OS X 10.1 before spending any serious time in OS X. (The system should be shipping with 10.1 by the time you read this.)

If you want to do video editing on your new Mac, you'll probably want it equipped with a SuperDrive to burn DVDs, which narrows your choice to the 867MHz G4 or the pricier 800MHz dual-processor model. The 867MHz version will answer almost any computing need you could have, unless you spend most of your time in Adobe Photoshop or some other dual-processor-aware application. Keep in mind that OS X supports dual processing at the OS level, so if you intend to use the forthcoming Adobe Photoshop for OS X, the dual-processor 800MHz G4 will give you the absolute maximum graphics bang for your buck.

Still, you'd have a hard time going wrong with the 867MHz G4. This model offers good performance for a decent price, and it should meet almost any graphics pro's needs, unless you're a digital-photo maven with no room for compromise.

—*Barry Lubov*

EDITORS' RATING 7.5

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	8
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	8
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	6
VALUE	7

Fast performance; large L3 cache; speedy 7,200rpm hard drive; SuperDrive DVD-R/CD-RW drive; great for graphics pros

Only 128MB of RAM; so-so 3D performance; free support for only 90 days

DIRECT PRICE: $3,498

AS TESTED: 867MHz Motorola PowerPC G4; 128MB 133MHz SDRAM; 60GB hard drive; Apple SuperDrive DVD-R/CD-RW combo drive (8x/4x/24x CD, 4x DVD read, 2x DVD-R write); nVidia GeForce2 MX graphics card with 32MB SDRAM; 17-inch TFT SXGA (1,280 by 1,024) Apple Studio display; integrated sound codec; integrated V.90 modem; integrated Gigabit Ethernet; Mac OS 9.2 and OS X 10.0.4; additional software

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- ieMagazine, August 2001

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DESKTOPS

ABS PERFORMANCE 1

A Powerful Performance Worthy of an Encore

MULTIMEDIA ENTHUSIASTS AND GAMERS SEEKING A PC WITH A bleeding-edge CPU and a 3D-crunching GeForce3 graphics card will love the wealth of extras ABS Computer Technologies includes with its $2,469 Performance 1. This 1.8GHz Pentium 4-based system's build quality, setup, and accessories are all top-notch, and its generous software bundle is icing on the cake, even if its performance isn't meaningfully better than that of less expensive 1.7GHz PCs we've tested.

We've come to expect high-end systems to include both a CD-RW drive and a DVD-ROM drive. The Performance 1 is no exception, packing in a Plextor PlexWriter 16/10/40A and a 16x AOpen DVD-ROM drive; the latter delivered a high-quality video stream in both testing and informal movie watching. Like many DVD-ROM drives, though, it's on the noisy side. You'll want to set the computer case on the floor to minimize the distraction.

The system also includes Creative Labs' Sound Blaster Live Platinum 5.1 sound card and its associated LiveDrive bay module. This combination affords plenty of audio-input and -output options, not to mention clean analog and digital sound. ABS rounds out the audio package with the Klipsch ProMedia 4.1 THX speaker system, comprising four 60-watt two-way satellites and a 160-watt subwoofer. The subwoofer has two 6.5-inch drivers mounted on either side of its black cabinet and a 2.5-inch port on its front. Without a doubt, the Klipsch system is the best-sounding PC speaker system we've encountered to date.

Though not quite a wide-screen TV, the system's Optiquest Q95 monitor produces a sharp, well-focused image with excellent color. Tuning this 19-inch monitor is a snap: The clear onscreen menus are easy to navigate using the Q95's controls. The display features a fine 0.23mm horizontal dot pitch (0.27mm diagonal) and can provide a rock-steady 80Hz refresh rate all the way up to 1,280-by-1,024 resolution. Best of all, the monitor's enclosure isn't much larger than that of a typical 17-inch CRT, so it won't hog space on your desk.

The Performance 1's case is sturdily constructed, with a 300-watt power supply—no skimping here, either. Delving inside reveals a carefully built system with neatly channeled wiring. The three 5.25-inch bays are occupied, but the case has room for another hard drive and one 3.5-inch external device, such as a Zip or SuperDisk drive.

Two 128MB 800MHz RDRAM modules reside in the Micro-Star motherboard, leaving two sockets available. Of the board's five 32-bit PCI slots, one remains open. The other four hold a 3Com network card, a U.S. Robotics 56kbps modem, an IEEE 1394 (FireWire) card, and the Sound Blaster card.

In performance testing, the Performance 1's GeForce3 graphics card, though undeniably rocket-fast, didn't quite measure up to expectations. Even with the latest nVidia drivers, the ABS system's 3DMark2001 score was slightly lower than that of the GeForce3-equipped, 1.7GHz Alienware Area 51 we looked at in our September issue. (See "Built for Speed," p. 98.) The Performance 1's 80GB Western Digital hard drive, however, scorched our benchmarks, turning in scores comparable to systems running Windows 2000—quite an accomplishment for a Windows Me system. The Performance 1 also delivered the best MPEG-2 encoding performance we've seen thus far (44.2 frames per second). Still, keep in mind that even if all the other components were identical, the jump up from 1.7GHz to 1.8GHz only represents a 6 percent increase in clock speed. We can *measure* the differences in performance, but no human being unaided by benchmarking software would be able to perceive the difference.

Still, it's hard to find fault with a system that has nearly everything, including a software bundle with Roxio's Easy CD Creator and DirectCD, Corel WordPerfect Office 2002, WinDVD, Ulead VideoStudio Basic, and a host of games and utilities. Aside from the lack of a substantial performance advantage over 1.7GHz Pentium 4-based systems, our only other complaint was with the Microsoft Internet Keyboard's mushy key action. Even the sole open PCI slot doesn't give us much pause, because the two USB and three IEEE 1394 (FireWire) ports offer plenty of possibilities for future expansion.

We liked the ABS Performance 1 in nearly every respect. Despite its midrange-to-high-end pricing, this system delivers reasonable value and a good mix of extras for your investment. But if a 1.8GHz CPU isn't an essential component, you can find similarly performing 1.7GHz PCs for less.

—*Matthew Klare*

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	7
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	8
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	8
VALUE	7

Generous mix of components; superb Klipsch speakers; excellent build quality and documentation

Not a big performance jump from 1.7GHz; mushy keyboard

DIRECT PRICE: $2,469

AS TESTED: 1.8GHz Pentium 4; 256MB 400MHz RDRAM; 80GB 7,200rpm hard drive; 16x/10x/40x CD-RW drive; 16x DVD-ROM drive; nVidia GeForce3 graphics card with 64MB DDR SDRAM; 19-inch Optiquest Q95 monitor; Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live Platinum 5.1 sound card; Klipsch ProMedia 4.1 THX satellite/subwoofer speaker system; U.S. Robotics V.90 modem; 3Com 10/100mbps Ethernet card; Windows Me; WordPerfect Office 2002; additional software

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DESKTOPS

VOODOO MONSOON EGAD-DDR

This Red-Hot Gamer Breathes Fire

ZDNet BEST BUY

YOU DON'T JUST WANT THE FASTEST GAMING SYSTEM ON THE block—you want everyone to know it. Voodoo Computers has just what you need with its Monsoon EGAD-DDR system. There's nothing subtle or pedestrian about this 1.4GHz Athlon machine. It's the gaming equivalent of a neon-lit, cherry-red hot rod. And we're not kiddin' about the neon!

Approach the Monsoon's tower from the right, and it looks like a nicely styled but fairly standard case. On the left, though, where you'd normally find a slide-out panel, is a large transparent window designed to show off the components inside. The inside of our case was painted Ferrari red; black and yellow options are available as well. This effect is striking alone, but if you really want to draw attention, opt for Voodoo's interior neon light.

Clearly this is not the sort of PC you choose to hide under your desk.

The system isn't the PC equivalent of one of those flashy custom Honda Civics that actually hides a stock four-cylinder engine under its hood, either. Our $3,957 test configuration turned in some of the highest benchmark scores we've seen yet for a Windows Me system, beating out not only other Athlon systems in most tests, but even dusting a 1.8GHz Pentium 4 system in BAPCo SYSmark 2001 and Quake III Arena testing. If you feel you need more than the Monsoon's 143.6 frames per second in Quake III, maybe it's time to find a new hobby.

The excellent performance stems from the system's unerringly high-end components, which include 256MB of DDR SDRAM, two 7,200rpm 40GB hard drives in a RAID 0 array, and a GeForce3 graphics card (red to match the interior). For an extra performance edge, Voodoo overclocks some of the components. The motherboard runs at a bus speed of 135MHz, accelerating memory access and yielding an effective processor speed of slightly faster than 1.42GHz. As overclocking goes, this is pretty tame stuff—nothing like the 1.25 times the rated speed or more that some techies go for. The company overclocks the GeForce3 card as well. We did experience one system lockup during testing, but otherwise the Monsoon proved stable over a week of heavy gaming.

Don't worry about overclocking-related heat. The system is packed with fans, including an exhaust fan at the top of the case and another that blows across the expansion cards. Voodoo also emphasizes its use of an improved thermal-cooling compound between the Athlon and its fan/heat sink. To further improve ventilation, the company routes cables neatly around the edge of the Asus motherboard.

The other components are equally impressive: a trayless DVD-ROM drive, a 16x/10x/40x CD burner, a Hercules Game Theater XP sound card, and the sonic-powerhouse Klipsch ProMedia 4.1 speaker system. Sound is a critical part of the overall gaming experience, and on this count the Monsoon definitely delivers. The Samsung SyncMaster 955DF flat-screen monitor is capable, if not exceptional. You can customize most system components, and Voodoo offers assistance in making sure your system is configured to meet your needs.

Like other gaming-PC vendors, Voodoo strips extraneous software from Windows startup to optimize game speed. Unlike most of its competitors, the company offers a choice of office suites as an added-cost option, in case you actually need to get some work done between deathmatches. The Monsoon includes an actual system manual in addition to documentation and driver CDs for all components. One particularly slick option is a $42.88 LAN-party carry bag, a mesh netting that fits around your computer and includes pockets for keyboard, mouse, and the bundled 25-foot Ethernet cable. Choose this option, and you can be sure to arrive at the LAN party in style.

Voodoo includes a three-year parts-and-labor warranty, a welcome benefit for users concerned about overclocking's effect on hardware longevity. An optional warranty upgrade covers shipping both ways—worth considering for U.S. buyers, given Voodoo's Canadian location.

The Voodoo Monsoon EGAD-DDR is a pricey system, but at this writing it's the fastest gaming PC available—not to mention a heck of a conversation piece for your next gaming get-together. If you can afford to splurge, it won't disappoint.

—Denny Atkin

EDITORS' RATING 8.3

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	9
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	9
PERFORMANCE	9
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	8
VALUE	7

Extremely fast; transparent-sided, attention-getting case; excellent documentation; fully configurable

Overclocking has potential to affect stability; expensive

DIRECT PRICE: $3,957

AS TESTED: 1.4GHz Athlon processor; 256MB PC2100 DDR SDRAM; two 40GB 7,200rpm hard drives in a RAID 0 array; 16x/10x/40x CD-RW drive; 16x DVD-ROM drive; 19-inch Samsung SyncMaster 955DF CRT; Gainward CardExpert GeForce3 graphics card with 64MB DDR SDRAM; Hercules Game Theater XP sound card; Klipsch ProMedia 4.1 satellite/subwoofer speaker system; D-Link 10/100mbps 538TX Ethernet card; Windows Me

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In the beginning...

digital cameras thundered across the landscape wearing bulky plastic armor. They ate batteries with alarming regularity, produced low quality images and cost nearly a king's ransom. Not so today. With new technology, digital cameras have taken a big evolutionary leap forward. Sales of digital cameras are surging as people are finding out how easy they are to use. Why are digital cameras winning the contest of survival of the fittest? We've outlined three major features that make the new generation of digital cameras the best choice for you.

resolution: more is better

The higher the resolution the easier you can display or print digital photos without losing image quality. More pixels mean higher resolution. You'll want a camera with at least 1 megapixel (1 MP) of resolution.

The HP Photosmart 318 digital camera, with 2x digital zoom, is the perfect entry-level camera that gives you a full 2.31 MP of resolution. It's also fully automatic so you can capture photos effortlessly on the go. It is just the thing for taking quick pictures of your family for sending in e-mail or posting on the Web. *Suggested retail price: $199.99**

zoom: optical vs. digital

If you want to take close-ups of distant objects, at graduations, for example, then you'll need a camera with more optical zoom power. While digital zoom works in everyday situations optical zoom outshines digital zoom in photo quality and clarity.

The HP Photosmart 612 digital camera includes all the good features of the 318 such as 2.3 MP resolution and 2x digital zoom but adds an advanced 2x optical zoom to enhance your photos. It's perfect for taking quality digital photos for your kid's school projects, or taking vacation shots. *Suggested retail price: $299.99**

Ok, so I have taken some great pictures, now what?!

If you find yourself taking more pictures than ever with your new digital camera, consider a matching photo printer. You get photo-quality prints on the spot, without having to start up your PC or Mac.

The **HP Photosmart 1315 printer** can print directly from your camera's CompactFlash card. On a 2.5-inch color LCD screen, the photo preview feature offers the ability to choose the images you want before you print . And you can print up to 2400 dpi on premium photo papers with up to 17 pages per minute in black, up to 13 in color. And yes, you can still use your PC/Mac if you really want to.

professional features

Beyond the basics of resolution and optical zoom, certain cameras offer features that even a professional would love. Look for options that give you greater artistic control. These cameras offer fully automatic and manual modes. Look for cameras that switch quickly between the two-so you can always get your shot.

The HP Photosmart 715 digital camera with 3.3 MP resolution and 3x optical zoom, changes modes automatically for great looking pictures without the guesswork. The perfect step-up from the 612, the 715's auto exposure function responds quickly so you'll never miss a moment fumbling with settings. Use it to get professional results during quick changing events, like your son's football game, or the company picnic. *Suggested retail price: $499.99**

in next months issue:

hpshopping.com helps you learn to take pictures like the pros!

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HARDWARE

SONY MAVICA MVC-CD300

Snap Your Pics To CD-RW Discs

SONY ELECTRONICS' $999.95 MAVICA MVC-CD300 digital camera is a sharp snapshooter with a savvy storage scheme. Like the company's groundbreaking MVC-CD1000, this new model has a built-in CD burner that writes image files to miniature 3-inch CDs.

The 3.3-megapixel MVC-CD300 offers excellent image quality and a 3x f2.0 Zeiss zoom lens, as well as a bright 2.5-inch LCD on the back that functions as both a viewfinder and an easy-to-use menu display. The camera offers auto, aperture-priority, shutter-priority, and manual modes. We appreciate the ability to adjust the increments for exposure compensation in 0.3EV, 0.7EV, or 1.0EV steps. The manual-focus mode is also useful. Using the jog dial on the rear of the camera, you can perform many operations, such as adjusting the aperture, shutter speed, or focal distance.

The camera benefits from its large CCD, letting you capture images measuring up to 2,048 by 1,536 pixels. The unit also supports MPEG and clip-motion video capture. A built-in microphone records audio to accompany the video, with a speaker enabling audio playback.

Unlike its predecessor, the MVC-CD300 can write to either CD-RW or CD-R discs to store those images and mini-movies. Using a CD-RW disc lets you delete images as you would on a conventional flash-memory-based digital camera.

The CD storage scheme does have its drawbacks. You can capture JPEGs at the highest quality setting in about 3 seconds, and three shots in burst mode in under 2 seconds. But expect to wait an additional 20 seconds for them to record. Uncompressed images take longer. The MVC-CD300 needs a full minute to shoot and record a TIFF image.

Despite these performance drawbacks, the camera delivers vivid, sharp, and well-exposed images, yielding the most realistic color outdoors.

We found the Sony Mavica MVC-CD300 to be a well-designed camera, though it is underequipped for shooting fast-action sequences. —*Matthew Klare*

EDITORS' RATING 7.5

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	8
EASE OF USE	7
FEATURES	8
IMAGE QUALITY	8
PERFORMANCE	7
VALUE	7

CD-R and CD-RW storage; intuitive menus and controls; excellent image quality

Sluggish TIFF recording; slow shot-to-shot speed; LCD viewfinder only

DIRECT PRICE: $999.95

COMPANY: Sony Electronics
Park Ridge, NJ; 800-222-7669
www.sony.com

ZDNet Price It!™ 34807

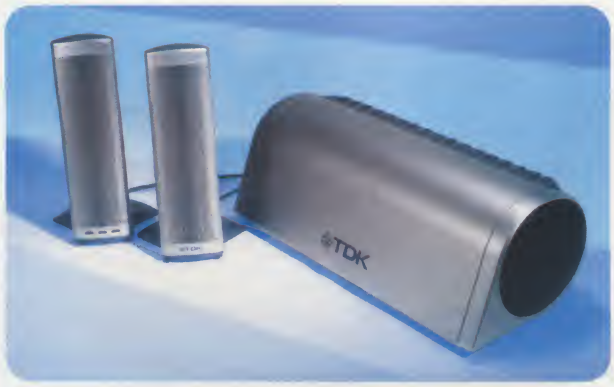
For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

TDK TREMOR S150

Ready to Rumble, But Too Many Fumbles

THE $149.99 TREMOR S150 MULTIMEDIA SPEAKER system from TDK Electronics is more of a mild aftershock. The packaging and manual repeatedly mention "pure" and "richly detailed" sound, but the Tremor system exhibits the lack of clarity that plagues most flat-panel speakers. Still, its space-saving design may appeal to gamers looking for an easily portable sound system that delivers volume to spare.

The Tremor S150 is made up of two flat-panel satellite speakers and a tubular subwoofer. The compact subwoofer fits easily under most desks, and its power supply is self-contained, so there's no adapter brick to deal with. The speakers take up little desk space on their stands, and included mounts let you attach the satellites to a wall or the sides of your monitor.



The sleek silver-and-gray subwoofer pushes out an impressive amount of bass, but the satellites' sound is disappointing. Though the flat-panel design provides a wider dispersion pattern—and thus a wider audio "sweet spot"—the sound it produces isn't very sweet. You'll get plenty of volume, but at all levels the sound has a muffled quality. The lack of sound depth was most noticeable during music playback; games such as MechWarrior IV and Unreal Tournament fared better. Turning up the treble helps a bit, but the Tremor satellites can't compare to a good set of traditional speakers.

Also, the controls are frustrating to use. The power switch is inconveniently located on the subwoofer, and tiny, hard-to-adjust volume, treble, and bass dials are on the right satellite. The speakers lack a headphone jack, as well as a way to mute the audio quickly, short of reaching down to the floor and killing the power.

The TDK Tremor S150 is worth a look if you want a loud, compact speaker system. But discerning listeners will want to pass it up, because better-sounding sets such as the Klipsch ProMedia 2.1 cost just a bit more. —*Denny Atkin*

EDITORS' RATING 5.5

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	7
FEATURES	6
SOUND QUALITY	5
VALUE	4

Compact satellites; easily portable; wall/monitor mounts for satellites

Muddy sound; poorly designed controls; no headphone jack

MFR. EST. PRICE: $149.99

COMPANY: TDK Electronics
Garden City, NY
800-835-8273, 516-535-2600
www.tdk.com

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SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 74

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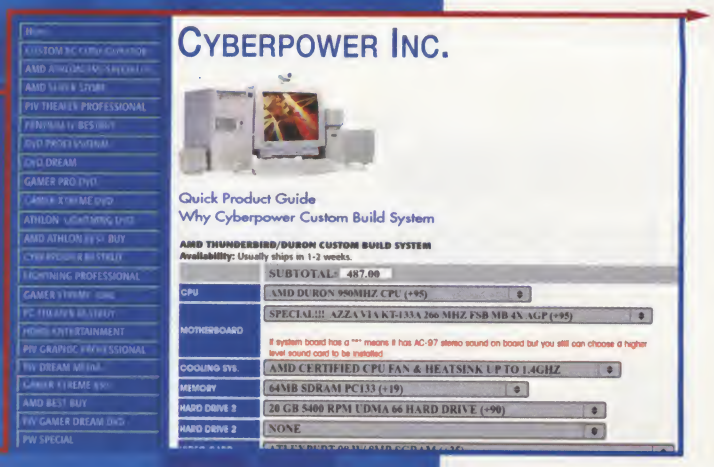

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JUNE 2001 Computer Buyer's Guide Best Buy

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HARDWARE

HERCULES 3D PROPHET 4500 64MB

This Prophet Preaches False 3D Promises

BILLED AS A NEW ADD-IN CARD THAT WILL launch your system to the cutting edge of 3D-graphics performance, the Hercules 3D Prophet 4500 64MB is certainly an affordable option at $149.99.

Hercules built the 3D Prophet around the new STMicroelectronics Kyro II chip, a 128-bit memory bus, and 64MB of SDRAM. The successes the card achieves revolve primarily around its Tile Based Rendering (TBR) technology. Using TBR, the Kyro II processes only the portions of the image actually visible to the user—the chipset won't render the portion of a table hidden by a wall, for example. The card also features Environment-Mapped Bump Mapping (EMBM), which renders bumps and waves more realistically, and eight-layer multitexturing for even better-looking images.

The 3D Prophet relies heavily on your system's CPU, and this demand cuts into some of the technological wizardry. In particular, the card performs transform and lighting (T&L) in software rather than supporting it in hardware. In informal testing, some 3D-heavy games slowed quite noticeably on a 700MHz Pentium III system; this was especially apparent with Unreal Tournament and Quake III Arena. The games did pick up decently on a 1.1GHz system. Perhaps updated drivers will solve some of the slowdowns.

In lab testing on an 800MHz Pentium III testbed, the card performed near the low end of our Quake III frame-rate tests. Also, its scores on MadOnion.com's 3DMark2001 tests place it well behind boards using the 64MB DDR version of the ATI Radeon, and farther still behind numbers we've seen generated by cards based on nVidia's GeForce3 chipset. Even the 3D Prophet's 2D performance ranked significantly below that of most cards we've tested.

In its favor, the 3D Prophet delivered highly readable 1,920-by-1,440 resolution on a 22-inch monitor under Windows 2000, so the card might be worth a look for graphics or publishing professionals working at high resolutions on large monitors. If you're a hard-core gamer, however, the 3D Prophet 4500 may not quench your graphics thirst. —*Neil Randall*

EDITORS' RATING 6.8

RATED 1 TO 10

FEATURES	7
SETUP AND CONTROLS	8
2D PERFORMANCE	5
3D PERFORMANCE	6
VALUE	8

Low price; EMBM and TBR technologies

Heavily taxes your CPU; poor performance; software-based, not hardware-based, T&L

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EIZO FLEXSCAN L461

More Screen For Less Green

IF YOU'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT REPLACING THAT clunky CRT monitor with an LCD unit, Eizo Nanao wants you to add an inch to the equation. Until now, your only sub-$1,000 choices have been 15-inch models. Now, Eizo's FlexScan L461, a 16-inch LCD, pushes aside that price barrier with its $795 estimated price. Besides giving you a larger image, the FlexScan L461 also provides a higher resolution—1,280 by 1,024, the same as a 17-inch LCD.

You don't get extras such as built-in speakers or a USB hub, but you do get a DVI-I connector, which supports both analog and digital signals. If you have a graphics card with a digital output, the L461 presents you with a picture-perfect screen at 1,280 by 1,024. (The L461 ships with an analog cable unless you specify otherwise, though Eizo will send you one free of charge if you change your mind later.)

In analog mode, the screen is uniformly sharp, with accurate colors. The only problem we saw in our tests was the presence of moiré patterns in shades of gray. We were able to correct the problem somewhat by adjusting the phase setting, but it never completely disappeared.

Another oddity in analog mode: When we hit the Auto Adjustment button, instead of setting the resolution to its native 1,280 by 1,024, the monitor shifted to a somewhat fuzzy 640 by 480. Though the quirk wasn't difficult to work around, the beauty of autosync is supposed to be its one-button ease.

You can adjust the display's tilt, but not the height or swivel. The swivel we can live without, but the height adjustment would have been useful. The L461 has a wide 160-degree horizontal and a standard 130-degree vertical viewing angle.

You'll certainly appreciate the extra working area a 16-inch display affords. The Eizo FlexScan L461 gives you that extra space—plus an excellent image—without making you spend hundreds more for a 17-inch display. —*Matt Elliott*

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	8
FEATURES	7
IMAGE QUALITY	8
SETUP AND INSTALLATION	9
VALUE	6

Top resolution is 1,280 by 1,024; good image quality, especially in digital mode; wide horizontal viewing angle

Moiré patterns in analog mode; no height adjustment; digital and analog cables aren't both included

MFR. EST. PRICE: $795

COMPANY:
Eizo Nanao Technologies
Cypress, CA
800-800-5202, 562-431-5011
www.eizo.com

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ZDNet BEST BUY

WESTERN DIGITAL'S $299 CAVIAR WD1000BB IS one of the first 100GB drives to hit the market. If you need the roomiest possible hard drive for storing loads of digital video, MP3s, and digital still images, the Caviar is the current drive of choice. Maxtor's 100GB, 5,400rpm 536DX shipped slightly earlier, but the Western Digital drive spins at 7,200rpm, delivering better performance for the same price.

The Caviar's documentation and accessories are well-thought-out. The package includes a poster that describes each installation step thoroughly, as well as brackets for securing the drive in a 5.25-inch bay (not needed for a 3.5-inch bay), screws, and a 40-pin ribbon cable. The Caviar doesn't come with backup software, but it does include Western Digital's Data Lifeguard utility, which guides you through installation and includes special tools for detecting and repairing drive errors.

We mounted the Caviar in an 800MHz Pentium III-based Dell Dimension test system running Windows 98 Second Edition and equipped with a Promise Technology Ultra100 controller card. As expected, the Caviar outperformed the Maxtor 536DX in every test at every mode level. The performance increase between Mode 4 and Mode 5 was negligible, however. The reason, according to Western Digital, is that the Caviar's disk-to-buffer data-transfer rate maxes out at 66MB per second, which is the data-transfer ceiling of Ultra ATA/66 (Mode 4). As a result, even if your PC supports only Ultra ATA/66, you'll get nearly the same performance as you would under Ultra ATA/100.

Despite its whopping capacity and excellent performance, the Caviar drive isn't perfect. It has a slightly higher failure rate than the Maxtor 536DX (0.8 percent versus 0.5 percent), and though both companies offer three-year warranties, Maxtor has a no-questions-asked return policy. Western Digital handles returns on a case-by-case basis.

But these are minor reservations. For now, the Western Digital Caviar WD1000BB is the biggest and most cost-effective hard drive money can buy.

—Rick Popko

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

RATED 1 TO 10

FEATURES	7
INSTALLATION AND SETUP	8
PERFORMANCE	8

Enormous 100GB capacity; low cost per gigabyte; fast performance; good out-of-box experience

Maxtor 100GB drive has better return policy and lower failure rate; no backup software

DIRECT PRICE: $299

COMPANY: Western Digital
Lake Forest, CA
888-935-8893, 949-672-7000
www.westerndigital.com

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IOMEGA CD-RW PREDATOR

The Hunt Is Over For Portable CD-RW

IOMEGA'S CD-RW PREDATOR CAN ALMOST PASS ITSELF off as a sleek new Sony Discman. Far from the clunky design of other external CD-RW drives, this top-loading burner is thin and light, with an attractive silver-and-blue color scheme. Even better, the $299.95 drive comes with an IEEE 1394 (FireWire) interface module, which enables 8x write, 4x rewrite, and 32x read speeds. Last year, 8x/4x/32x would have been the top speed for an internal drive.

Iomega also sells the Predator in a $249.95 package with a USB 1.1 interface adapter, which limits the drive's top speeds to 4x/4x/6x. (This adapter costs $40 if bought separately.) A USB 2.0 adapter is expected by the end of the year.

Apart from its flexible connectivity, the Predator's main advantage is its size. Its 1.8-by-6.5-by-9.8-inch (HWD) dimensions let it fit virtually anywhere, and the small form factor brings the Predator's weight down to 1.3 pounds.

Setup is straightforward: Install the drivers, then plug in the IEEE 1394 and power cables, and Windows assigns the Predator a drive letter. An included audio cable connects the Predator to your sound card for audio-CD output. A volume control and headphone jack on the front panel are nice touches.

Based purely on write, rewrite, and read speeds, the Predator's performance is comparable to that of other 8x-write drives, such as the Micro Solutions Backpack Triple Play or Samsung SM-308 RW Combo. Its CD-RW read speed beat out every external drive we've seen, as well as a few internal ones. Its rewrite speed, however, was a bit slow.

The unit's ability to work with PCs or Macs is convenient, and the bundled software, which includes Roxio's Easy CD Creator 4.0 for PCs and Toast 4.1.2 for Macs, is robust and easy to use. The Iomega CD-RW Predator's IEEE 1394 interface and compact size will keep makers of competing drives looking over their shoulders.

—Rich Brown

EDITORS' RATING 7.0

RATED 1 TO 10

FEATURES	7
INSTALLATION	8
PERFORMANCE	7
VALUE	6

Small; easy setup; compatible with PCs and Macs; IEEE 1394 interface enables 8x write speed in an external drive

Slow rewrite speed

DIRECT PRICE: $299.95

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MOBILE

CASIO CASSIOPEIA FIVA MPC-206E

The Power of Windows In a Pint-Size Package

ZDNet BEST BUY

IF ROBINSON CRUSOE WERE MAROONED TODAY, HE'D PROBABLY like to have the Cassiopeia Fiva MPC-206E by his side. A 600MHz notebook computer with a full array of features (including a 20GB hard drive, an active-matrix LCD, and just about all the connections you could use), the $1,999 Fiva promises good battery life in a unit that weighs just over 2 pounds and is less than an inch thick.

The key factor behind the unit's light weight, compact size, and extraordinary battery life for its class is Transmeta's Crusoe processor, which Casio engineers chose as the brains of the box. This CPU was designed from the ground up to save power. The clock speed and chip voltage automatically drop when processing demands decrease, which greatly reduces power consumption. This makes it possible to get longer life from lighter, lower-capacity batteries than those used in most notebooks.

The Fiva's sleek silver case measures just 0.9 inch by 9.2 inches by 7.9 inches, a footprint smaller than a sheet of paper. The display measures 8.4 inches diagonally, which seems small compared even with the 12.1-inch expanses found on ultraportables. But the exceptionally bright SVGA (800-by-600 native resolution) LCD should be adequate for most purposes. And the lower resolution makes desktop icons and text larger than they would be in XGA (1,024-by-768) mode.

The case also houses several surprises, such as stereo sound backed by speakers and headset jack, and a built-in microphone. The Fiva also has an innovative Linux mode that lets you quickly boot without loading Windows, so you can play the bundled MP3-player software. The unit has slots for a PC Card and a CompactFlash card, as well as ports for IEEE 1394 (FireWire), a V.90 modem, USB, and 10/100BaseT Ethernet. In addition, an RGB connector lets you hook up to an external monitor or projector.

Casio rates the standard lithium-ion battery for 4.5 hours, but you can opt for a $219.95 high-capacity battery that's slightly heavier but rated for 9 hours of use. The standard battery delivered just less than 2.5 hours of running time per charge during testing. Your experience, however, will depend on what applications you run and what demands they put on the processor. A handy utility, Mobile Cockpit II, makes it easy to configure the power-saving features and monitors the processor speed and remaining battery power while you work. As might be expected, the processing scores were lower than for faster machines, although the graphics scores were better than those of some 700MHz and faster notebooks.

One of Mobile Cockpit II's drawbacks is that it takes up valuable space on the small screen, but you can set it to autohide just as you can with the Windows taskbar. More troubling, the keyboard has just 0.63-inch pitch between keys, which is considerably smaller than the 0.75-inch pitch found on a standard desktop keyboard. Ham-fisted users will be able to hunt and peck on the Fiva keyboard, but it may take smaller hands and some practice to get to the point where you can touch-type with any speed and accuracy. (And yes, this review was written on a Fiva.) An external keyboard may be a solution; Casio offers a USB keyboard as an accessory.

Surprisingly for such a small device, the Fiva does have some expansion options. You can get an external USB floppy drive for $99.95 or a PC-Card-based CD-ROM drive for $299.95. Our evaluation unit shipped with 128MB of base memory, but 64MB is integrated. The rest of the Fiva's RAM resides in a single memory slot, as a 64MB SO-DIMM. If you need more, you'll have to take out the 64MB stick and get a 128MB module instead.

More than a PDA or handheld computer, the Cassiopeia Fiva MPC-206E delivers a full Windows Me machine in an eminently portable and practical package. Apart from the keyboard and smaller screen, you give up little that you'd get in a larger and heavier notebook. In return, you get a powerful computer whose battery life compares favorably with that of larger units. Some users may feel the 8.4-inch SVGA LCD or the tightly spaced keyboard cramps their style, but for those who want a notebook that weighs less than 2 pounds and runs full-blown Windows and all its compatible applications, the Fiva is a winner.

—Alfred Poor

EDITORS' RATING 7.8

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	9
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	7
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	7
VALUE	8

No-excuses Windows machine; extremely portable

Tiny keyboard; small screen; removable-media drives cost extra

DIRECT PRICE: $1,999

AS TESTED: 600MHz Transmeta Crusoe processor; 128MB 100MHz SDRAM; 20GB hard drive; SMI Lynx EM+ graphics controller with 2MB video RAM; 8.4-inch TFT SVGA (800-by-600) LCD; AC97 sound codec; integrated V.90 modem; integrated 10/100mbps Ethernet; Windows Me

COMPANY: Casio
Dover, NJ
800-836-8580, 973-361-5400
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MOBILE

COMPAQ PRESARIO 1215US

This Powerful Portable Is Athlon-Affordable

AT $1,899, THE COMPAQ PRESARIO 1215US IS A WELL-EQUIPPED desktop-replacement-class notebook that won't break your back—or your wallet. The box calls it a "Presario Internet PC," but it's certainly not a no-frills e-mail-and-Web portable.

A 1GHz AMD mobile Athlon 4 processor powers the 1215US, which comes with 128MB of PC133 memory. The notebook's speedy processor and responsive 2D graphics blow through office applications. It outperforms the 1GHz mobile Pentium III-based IBM ThinkPad T22, which gets an extra boost from Windows 2000.

For entertainment use, performance varies. DVD playback looks excellent, exhibiting no glitches, and the notebook has a composite-video port for viewing DVDs on a television. The above-average JBL speakers pump out loud sound without a hint of distortion, but they lack definitive bass, despite their use of ported bass reflex enclosures. And if you intend to play games on your notebook, this unit isn't a good choice. The dated 8MB Rage Mobility-M1 graphics chip turns in a dismal performance when running 3D games. The 14.1-inch TFT screen has a native resolution of 1,024 by 768, but the external monitor feed can go up to 1,280 by 1,024.

The battery lasted a competitive but unexceptional 3.3 hours in testing. A single battery will last through most DVD movies: We made it about halfway through the end credits of *The Matrix*, a 136-minute film, before the 1215US shut down. The Athlon 4 processor and Via KT133 chipset use AMD's PowerNow technology, which adjusts the processor clock speed and voltage on the fly to accommodate system needs. This technology was developed with Phoenix Technologies and provides a wider range of clock-speed choices than Intel's two-level SpeedStep processors.

The three-spindle design comprises a 20GB hard drive, a DVD-ROM/CD-RW drive, and an internal floppy. All three drives are fixed, nonswappable units, but at just over 7 pounds, the 1215US is fairly light for a three-spindle system. Its black-and-silver, 1.7-by-12.2-by-10.8-inch case has a curvy shape, without the sharp corners that can poke you when you pull a notebook out of your briefcase.

The keyboard feels comfortable, with decent-size cursor and function keys, unlike many other Compaq notebooks that use function keys that are far too small. The SoftTouch palm rest feels nice, too, and contributes to an overall impression of quality. The touch pad is recessed a bit more than usual, a welcome improvement that makes it more difficult to thumb the cursor to the wrong part of your document accidentally when typing.

In the never-ending quest to duplicate the functionality of a wheel mouse on a notebook, Compaq includes a small up/down scroll rocker between the touch-pad buttons. It works well enough but offers no real value over the keyboard's page-movement keys.

The 1215US includes a 56kbps modem, as well as a 10/100mbps Ethernet port, a pair of USB ports, a parallel port, and a PS/2 port. The system lacks a serial port, however. Infrared is also absent, a disappointing omission given the usefulness of IR for communicating with Palm handhelds as well as Compaq's own iPaq Pocket PCs. The unit has only one PC Card slot, a shortcoming mitigated somewhat by the dual USB ports, but this is another surprising omission.

The software bundle is rather humdrum, including Microsoft Works (the basic version, which doesn't include Microsoft Word), a basic version of Easy CD Creator, Microsoft Money 2001, and Norton AntiVirus 2001. Compaq also includes three months of America Online Net access. Documentation consists of a quick-start booklet and an electronic manual on CD. The warranty lasts only a year, which unfortunately has become the standard in the consumer retail notebook market. Compaq does offer extended warranties at extra cost.

With poor 3D performance its only major failing, the Compaq Presario 1215US is an excellent value for those looking for a fairly light but full-featured notebook.

—*Denny Atkin*

EDITORS' RATING 7.0

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	8
EASE OF USE	7
FEATURES	6
PERFORMANCE	7
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	6
VALUE	8

Excellent application performance; light for a three-spindle notebook; good keyboard feel; sharp audio quality with good volume

All drives are fixed; poor 3D-graphics performance; no serial or IR ports

DIRECT PRICE: $1,899

AS TESTED: 1GHz Athlon 4; 128MB 133MHz SDRAM; 20GB hard drive; DVD-ROM/CD-RW drive (4x/4x/24x CD, 8x DVD); ATI Rage Mobility-M1 graphics controller with 8MB SDRAM; 14.1-inch TFT XGA (1,024-by-768) LCD; ADI 1885 sound chipset; stereo speakers; integrated microphone; integrated V.90 modem; integrated 10/100mbps Ethernet; Windows Me; Microsoft Works 6.0; additional software

COMPANY:
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SECTION CONTINUES ON PAGE 86

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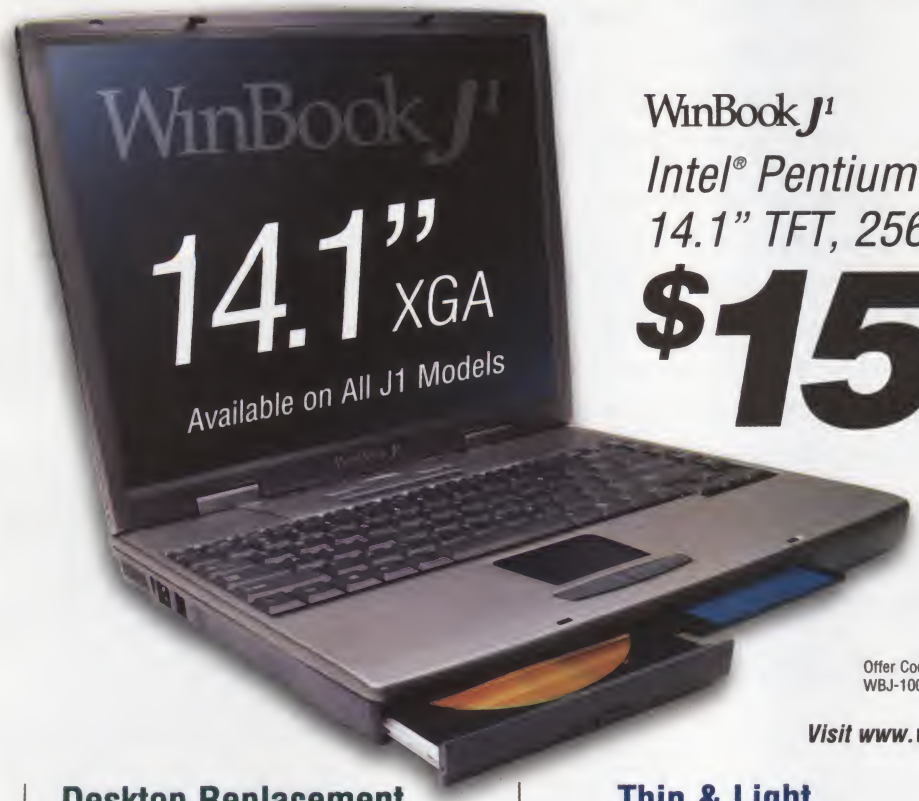

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Intel® Pentium® III processor, 1GHz, 14.1" TFT, 256 MB, 20 GB, ***CD-RW/DVD***

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- Intel® Celeron™ processor
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- 15.1" XGA TFT color display
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- 1 year limited extendable warranty
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Upgrade the hard drive from 5 GB to 15 GB — **$100**

Thin & Light

4.7 lbs
1" Thin

WinBook X1

- Intel® Pentium® III processor featuring SpeedStep™ Technology
- 900 MHz
- Thin (1") & lightweight (5.2 lbs.)
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- Microsoft Windows® XP Home, pre-installed

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Designed for Affordability

WinBook J1

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- Intel® Celeron™ processor
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Janice J. Chen
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#980147

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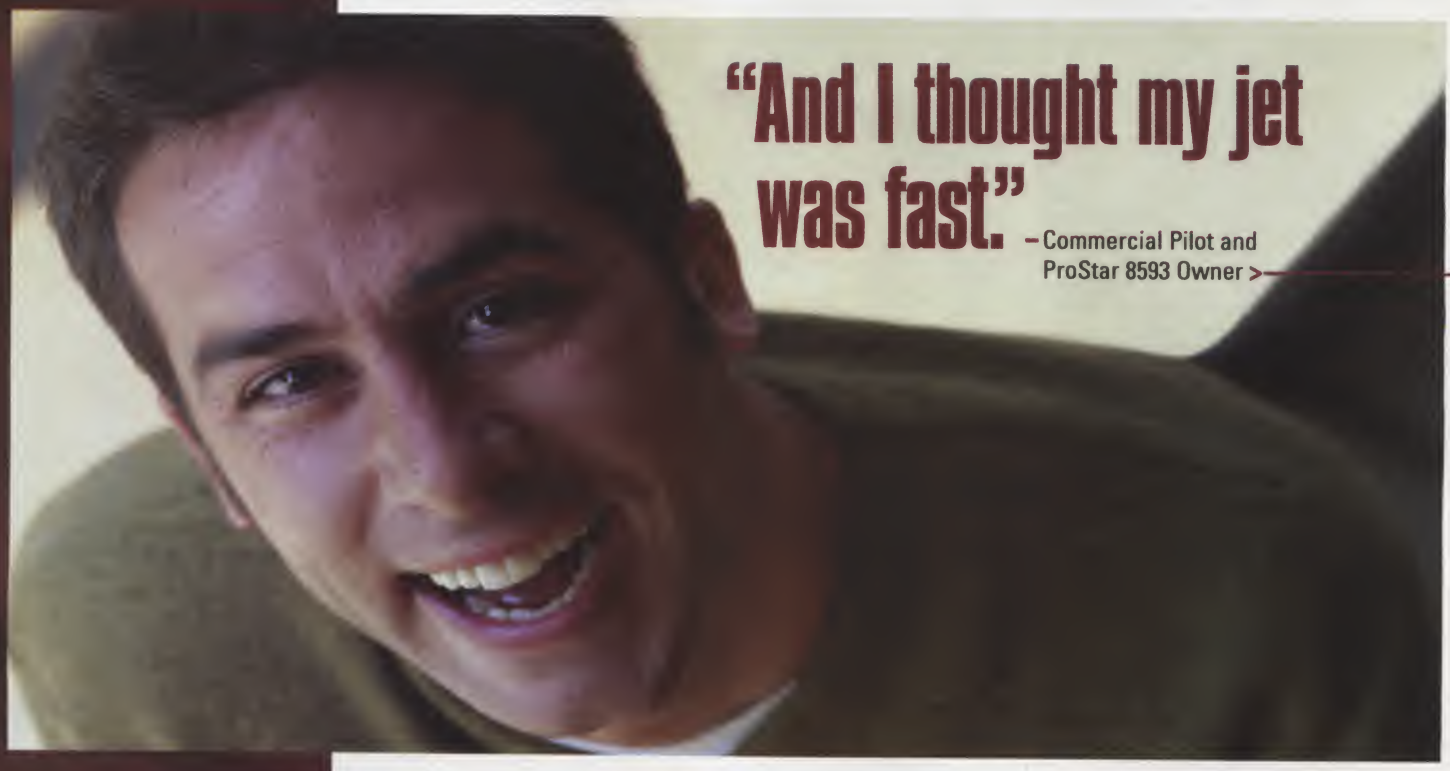

8593

Common Features
> 102-key Keyboard with Numeric Keypad
> 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
> 16MB Video Memory
> 10.0GB, 20.0GB, or 30.0GB Hard Drive opt.
> Removable 3.5" 1.44MB FDD exchangeable with opt. Iomega Zip Drive, or 2nd HDD
> 3D Surround Sound with Hardware Wavetable
> 2 Built-In Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
> 2 Type II or 1 Type III PCMCIA Slots
> 10/100 Ethernet Lan Adapter
> 56K Capable[3] V90 Modem
> 75.6w Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 1 IEEE 1394 Port & 1 Video-In Port
> 2 USB Ports & 1 TV-Out Port
> Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
> Jacks: 1 Line-In, 1 Line-Out and 1 Microphone
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adapter

15" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 933MHz
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
10.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1745

15" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.0GHz
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
30.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1845

2273

Common Features
> 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
> Integrated Ultra AGP Graphics (4x AGP Performance) with 64MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
> 10.0GB, 20.0GB, or 30.0GB Hard Drive opt.
> 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
> 3D Surround Sound
> 2 Built-In Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
> 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
> 10/100 Ethernet Lan Adapter
> 56K Capable[3] V90 Modem
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 3 Hot Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
> 1 IEEE 1394 Port
> 2 USB Ports & 1 TV-Out Port
> Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
> Jacks: 1 Headphone and 1 Microphone
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adapter
> Slim Notebook: 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h

14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.0GHz
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
20.0GB Hard Drive[4]
24X[2] Max. CD-ROM Drive (8X[1] Max. DVD opt.)

$1445

14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.2GHz
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
30.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1645

2273

Common Features
> 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
> Integrated Ultra AGP Graphics (4x AGP Performance) with 64MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
> 10.0GB, 20.0GB, or 30.0GB Hard Drive opt.
> 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
> 3D Surround Sound
> 2 Built-In Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
> 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
> 10/100 Ethernet Lan Adapter
> 56K Capable[3] V90 Modem
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 3 Hot Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
> 1 IEEE 1394 Port
> 2 USB Ports & 1 TV-Out Port
> Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
> Jacks: 1 Headphone and 1 Microphone
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adapter
> Slim Notebook: 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h

13.3" XGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.0GHz
128MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
10.0GB Hard Drive[4]
24X[2] Max. CD-ROM Drive (8X[1] Max. DVD opt.)

$1345

13.3" XGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.0GHz
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
20.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1445

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Our top-of-the-line notebook boasts unrivaled speed and power at an unbelievable price.

4283

Common Features
> 512KB On-Die L2 Cache
> 4X ATI M6-P Mobile Radeon 3D Accelerator
> External 32MB DDR SGRAM Video Memory
> 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
> 3D Surround Sound (SPDIF 5.1CH output for DVD)
> 2 Built-in Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-in Touchpad Pointing Device with Scrolling Keys
> 2 Type II or 1 Type III PCMCIA Slots
> 56K Capable[3] V.90 Modem and 10/100 Ethernet
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 3 Hot-Keys for E-Mail, Browser and DVD Player
> Snap-on color Palm Rest included
> High Performance Smart Lithium-Ion Battery
> 4 USB Ports, 1 IEEE 1394 Port & 1 TV-Out Port
> Other Ports: 1P, Ext. Keyboard, and Ext. CRT
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adaptor
> Slim Notebook: 12.28"w x 10.74"d x 1.48"h

14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
Mobile Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.0GHz - M
Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
256MB 133MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
30.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW/DVD Combo opt.)

$1845

15" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
Mobile Intel® Pentium® III Processor 1.2GHz - M
Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
512MB 133MHz SDRAM
30.0GB Hard Drive[4]
CD-RW/DVD Combo Drive

$2595

2293

Common Features
> 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
> Integrated Ultra AGP Graphics (4x AGP Performance) with 64MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
> 10.0GB, 20.0GB, or 30.0GB Hard Drive opt.
> 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
> 3D Surround Sound
> 2 Built-In Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
> 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
> 56K Capable[3] V90 Modem + 10/100 Ethernet
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 3 Hot Keys for E-Mail, Browser and API
> 2 USB Ports
> Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
> Jacks: 1 Headphone and 1 Microphone
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adapter
> Slim Notebook: 12.1"w x 10.0"d x 1.48"h

13.3" XGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 500MHz
128MB 100MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
10.0GB Hard Drive[4]
24X[2] Max. CD-ROM Drive (8X[1] Max. DVD opt.)

$1145

14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display
Mobile Pentium® III Processor 600MHz
Featuring Intel® Speed Step™ Technology
128MB 100MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
20.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1295

5190

Common Features
> 256KB On-Die L2 Cache
> Integrated Ultra AGP Graphics (4x AGP Performance) with 64MB Max. User Definable Share Memory Architecture
> 10.0GB, 20.0GB, or 30.0GB Hard Drive opt.
> 3.5" 1.44MB FDD
> 3D Sound Effect
> 2 Built-In Stereo Speakers and 1 Built-In Microphone
> Built-In Touchpad Pointing Device
> 1 Type II PCMCIA Slot
> 10/100 Ethernet Lan Adapter
> 56K Capable[3] V90 Modem
> Infra Red, Wireless Fast IR Interface
> 1 USB Port
> Other Ports: 1S, 1P, Ext. Keyboard and Ext. CRT
> Jacks: 1 Headphone and 1 Microphone
> Microsoft® Windows® XP home edition
> Carrying Case and AC Adapter
> Super Slim Notebook: 11"w x 9.4"d x 1.5"h

12.1" SVGA Active Matrix Display
Intel® Pentium® III Processor 500MHz
128MB 100MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
10.0GB Hard Drive[4]
24X[2] Max. CD-ROM Drive (8X[1] Max. DVD opt.)

$995

12.1" SVGA Active Matrix Display
Mobile Pentium® III Processor 600MHz
Featuring Intel® Speed Step™ Technology
128MB 100MHz SDRAM expandable to 512MB
10.0GB Hard Drive[4]
8X[1] Max. DVD-ROM Drive (CD-RW opt.)

$1145

Options > Car Adapter > Port Replicator > Numeric Keypad > PCMCIA Cards (V90Data/Fax, Ethernet 10/100 16-Bit, MPEG-II) > Please call for options availability, most options are notebook specific.

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Lightweight and Fashionable, But Typing Is Tough

SLIM AND SILVER SEEMS TO BE THE LATEST TREND IN PORTABLE computing, and the $2,199 Fujitsu LifeBook S Series wears the fashion well. At 4.4 pounds with a 12.1-inch XGA (1,024-by-768) TFT LCD and a swappable drive bay, its specs straddle the line between those found in ultraportables and midrange models. If you're willing to sacrifice a few inches of screen size for a system that offers more flexibility than your average ultraportable, then the LifeBook S offers the right mix.

Inside, the unit has what you'd expect: Intel's low-voltage, low-power 750MHz Pentium III SpeedStep processor, 128MB of RAM, and a 20GB hard drive. That 12.1-inch display is driven by ATI's Rage Mobility-M graphics controller chip, combined with 4MB of dedicated VRAM. The magnesium case provides extra sturdiness while keeping the weight down.

The LifeBook S lacks legacy ports, but its two USB ports, VGA out, PC Card slot, and sound, modem, and network jacks should suffice for most. The single PC Card slot accommodates Type I or Type II cards, and features an embedded SmartCard reader—though you still need an adapter and third-party software to make use of it. (Neither is included.) The unit also comes with a standard port replicator, which does provide standard serial, parallel, external-monitor, external-floppy-drive, and twin PS/2 ports. Our evaluation unit included an 8x DVD-ROM drive in the swappable-drive bay, which can also accommodate a CD-ROM, CD-RW, or combo drive, an extra battery, or a weight-saver module.

We especially like the design of the bay. It has a flip-out latch for ejecting the drive, which means you don't have to turn the system over or perform other contortions. And to enable hot-swapping on systems configured with Windows 98, as ours was, Fujitsu includes Softex's BayManager. (You can also order the LifeBook S with Windows 2000, but Windows Me is not available.) DVDs play well, although we wish the speakers were louder.

As long as you don't plan on playing games—and you enjoy Quake III at a sloth-like 3.7 frames per second—you'll also be satisfied with the LifeBook S's performance. The 750MHz processor is certainly up to the challenges afforded by ordinary business applications. Its battery life, a shade less than 4 hours, matches that of competitors such as the Gateway Solo 3450 and the Sony VAIO R505TE SuperSlim Pro, as does its overall performance. Driving an external display posed no problems, either.

Fujitsu also cleans up the Start menu for you by grouping applications into program groups such as Business Software, Communications Software, and Internet Software. We wish the company had taken things a step further, however, and done the same with the desktop. The system tray comes with 11 apps loaded into it, which is guaranteed to take up too much of Windows 98's system resources. If you buy this notebook with Windows 98, get to know Msconfig, the included utility that lets you trim the fat in terms of applets that load at startup. The software package in our test system included Microsoft Works Suite 2000, InterVideo's WinDVD, McAfee.com Active Shield, LapLink Gold, and PowerQuest's Drive Image.

We were torn by the notebook's input options. On one hand, it provides four programmable buttons that you can use as shortcuts to applications you specify. The keyboard has excellent travel and a bouncy feel, which we rarely see in thin notebooks, but the key layout is inadequate. The cursor keys are arranged in an inverted T, but they aren't separated from the rest of the keys, and the Up cursor key is next to the Shift key, which results in some frustrating typing miscues.

Fujitsu's one-year parts-and-labor warranty also disappoints. For $179.95, you can upgrade to three years of parts-and-labor coverage, but you still can't get onsite service. When you return the unit to Fujitsu for service, you have to pay one-way shipping.

Most of this system's competitors shave a few ounces by moving the drive bay into a slice-style dock or add a few ounces with a larger, heavier 13-inch display. Now you've got a novel option—a hot-swappable bay combined with a 12.1-inch screen—all in an extremely slim package. With the exception of its poorly laid-out keyboard, the part-ultraportable, part-thin-and-light Fujitsu LifeBook S Series is an attractive choice.

—Lori Grunin

EDITORS' RATING 7.3

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	7
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	7
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	6
VALUE	8

Elegant bay design; only 4.4 pounds

Poor keyboard layout; speakers don't get loud enough; no onsite-service option

DIRECT PRICE: $2,199

AS TESTED: 750MHz Pentium III; 128MB 100MHz SDRAM; 20GB hard drive; 8x DVD-ROM drive; ATI Rage Mobility-M PCI graphics controller with 4MB video RAM; 12.1-inch TFT XGA (1,024-by-768) LCD; Yamaha AC-XG sound codec; stereo speakers; integrated V.90 modem; integrated 10/100mbps Ethernet; port replicator; Windows 98 Second Edition; Microsoft Works 2000; additional software

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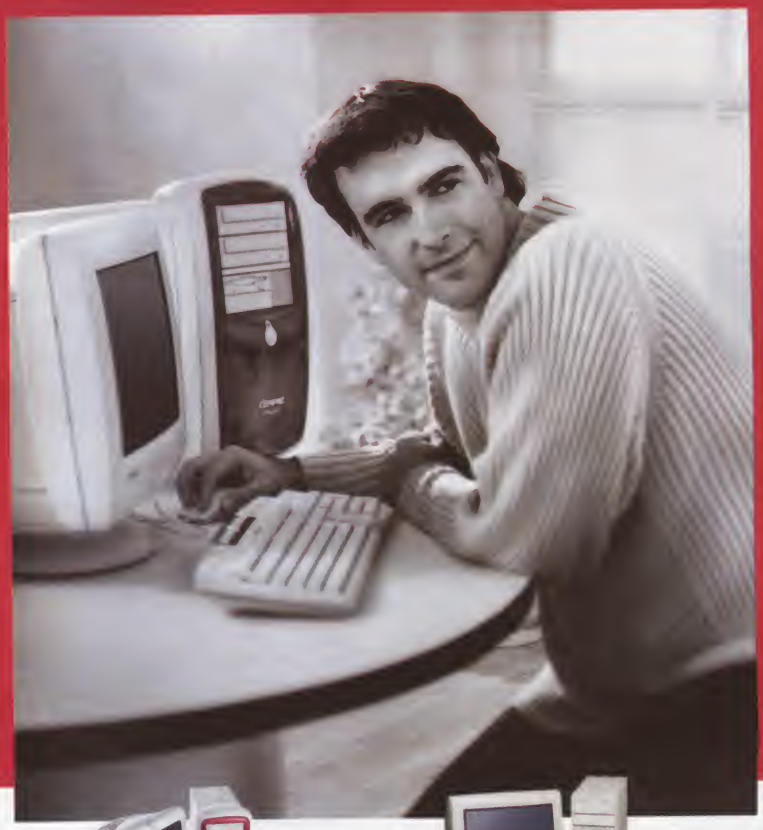

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32 MB SDR nVidia GeForce2 MX
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GSA Federal Supply Schedule — MicroProGov Contract #: GS-35F-0448J Check us out!

Intel Servers

*NetForce P4 1730xi

Intel® 1.7GHz Pentium® 4 Xeon™ processor
SuperMicro P4DC6 dual processor server board
SuperMicro SC760A 400W p.s. chassis
256MB RDRAM (Rambus) Memory
55.2GB (3) 18.4GB Ultra-160 SCA SCSI HDs
ADAPTEC 2100S Raid5 Controller 32MB RAM
48X Max IDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
Four Hot-Swap SCA SCSI drive bays
Integrated Dual Channel-one Ultra-160
Intel® 82559 LAN Controller
AGP 8MB Video Adapter
104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
3-year parts, 3-year on-site warranty
MS Windows 2000 Server (5-user), add $799

1.7GHz $2599
*Business Lease as low as $104.00

*NetForce ISP3030

Intel® 1GHz Pentium® III processor
Dual Processor Capable
Slim 1U 19" Rack Optimized Server
SuperMicro SuperServer 6010L
128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM Memory
18.3GB Ultra-160 SCSI Hard Drive
24X Max Slim EIDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
Integrated Dual NIC/Ultra-160 SCSI Controller
104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
3-year parts, 3-year on-site warranty
MS Windows 2000 Server (5-user), add $799

1GHz $1499
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*NetForce ISP2993

Intel® 933MHz Pentium® III processor
Slim 1U 19" Rack Optimized Server
SuperMicro SuperServer 5010E
128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM Memory
60.4GB IDE Hard Drive
24X Max Slim EIDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
Integrated 2 10/100 NIC Cards
104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
3-year parts, 3-year on-site warranty
MS Windows 2000 Server (5-user), add $799

933MHz $1059
*Business Lease as low as $42.00

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*Terminus 7850-PRO

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40GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Hard Drive
64MB nVIDIA GeFORCE-II MX AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Int. IDE Drive (add $99)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster 128 PCI
Deluxe ATX Tower Case
AltecLansing AVS-500 5 spkr. sound system
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® III — **1GHz $1059**
866MHz $999
933MHz $1039
*Business Lease as low as $40.00

*Caledon 7550-PRO

128KB Internal L2 Cache
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
128MB 133MHz SDRAM Memory
20GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
16MB nVIDIA TNT-2 AGP Graphics
56X IDE CD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
PCI 3D Wavetable Stereo Sound
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Stereo Microphone and 240W Speakers
Deluxe Micro ATX Tower Case
15" .28 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Celeron® — **900MHz $699**
800MHz $669
850MHz $689

***SYSTEMS INCLUDE:**
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- **McAfee Virus Scan for MS Windows**
- **COREL WordPerfect Suite2002, and 155 CD Titles w/Encyclopedia**
- **3 YEARS Limited Parts & Labor Warranty**

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USB Digital Video Camera	19
Iomega 100MB ZIP Drive Int. IDE	45
Iomega 100MB ZIP Drive Int. IDE	85
3COM 32-bit 10/100 Network Card	59
36-bit Color Flatbed USB Scanner	59
MS Office XP Small Business Edition	175
MS Office XP Professional Edition	299

*MINDSTROM G3-i550

NEW 2.0GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
Intel® i845 chipset w/400MHz FSB
512MB PC133 SDRAM Memory
100GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Hard Drive
64MB nVIDIA GeFORCE-3 AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
16x8x40 CD-RW Internal IDE Drive
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! 5.1 Digital
Deluxe ATX Tower Case 300W P.S.
Creative Labs Desktop Theatrer 5.1 DTT2200
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
1.5GHz $1599
1.7GHz $1679
1.9GHz $1879
2.0GHz $2079
*Business Lease as low as $86.00

*MINDSTROM G3-i370

NEW 2.0GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
Intel® i850 chipset w/400MHz FSB
256MB RDRAM (Rambus) Memory
80GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Hard Drive
64MB nVIDIA GeFORCE-3 AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
16x8x40 CD-RW Internal IDE Drive
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! 5.1 Digital
Deluxe ATX Tower Case 300W P.S.
Creative Labs Desktop Theatrer 5.1 DTT2200
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
1.5GHz $1579
1.6GHz $1619
1.8GHz $1729
2.0GHz $1999
*Business Lease as low as $83.00

*Constellation 9545

NEW 1.9GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
256MB PC133 SDRAM Memory
60GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Drive
Hercules Prophet 4500 64MB AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Int. IDE Drive (add $79)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! 5.1 Digital
Deluxe ATX Tower Case 300W P.S.
AltecLansing AVS-500 5 spkr. sound system
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
1.5GHz $1159
1.7GHz $1229
2.0GHz $1599
1.9GHz $1399
*Business Lease as low as $56.00

*Constellation 9180

NEW 1.7GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
Intel® i850 chipset w/400MHz FSB
128MB RDRAM (Rambus) Memory
40GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Drive
64MB nVIDIA GeFORCE-II MX AGP Graphics
12X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Int. IDE Drive (add $79)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster! Live Value
Deluxe ATX Tower Case 300W P.S.
AltecLansing ACS-45.2 5 spkr. sound system
17" .27 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
1.5GHz $1049
1.6GHz $1099
1.8GHz $1199
1.7GHz $1139
*Business Lease as low as $47.00

*Constellation 8850

NEW 1.5GHz Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
128MB RDRAM (Rambus) Memory
20GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
32MB nVIDIA TNT-2 M64 AGP Graphics
56X IDE CD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Int. IDE Drive (add $79)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Integrated PCI 3D wavetable Stereo Sound
Deluxe ATX Tower Case 300W P.S.
AltecLansing AVS-300 3 spkr. sound system
17" .27 N.I. Digital Monitor

Intel® Pentium® 4 processor
1.6GHz $899
1.7GHz $939
1.5GHz $859

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MINDSTROM G3-A266

GREAT GAMER

The 1.5GHz AMD Athlon™processor with enhanced 3DNow!™technology
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
256MB DDR PC2100 266MHz Memory
80GB Ultra100 IDE 7200RPM Hard Drive
64MB nVIDIA GeFORCE-3 AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
16x8x40 CD-RW Internal IDE Drive
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs SB Live! 5.1 Digital
Deluxe ATX Tower Case
Creative Labs Desktop Theater 5.1 DTT2200
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

AMD Athlon™processor

1.2GHz	$1419
1.3GHz	$1439
1.4GHz	$1459

1.5GHz **$1529**

*Business Lease as low as $62.00

*REGATA 8150MP

The 1.5GHz AMD Athlon™processor with enhanced 3DNow!™technology
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
256MB DDR PC2100 266MHz Memory
60GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
Hercules Prophet 4000XT 64MB AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Internal Drive (add $79)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster! Live Value
Deluxe ATX Tower Case
Altec Lansing AVS-500 5 spkr. Sound System
19" .26 N.I. Digital Monitor

AMD Athlon™processor

1.2GHz	$979
1.3GHz	$999
1.4GHz	$1029

1.5GHz **$1099**

*Business Lease as low as $45.00

*REGATA 7750MP

The 1.4GHz AMD Athlon™processor with enhanced 3DNow!™technology
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
256MB 133MHz SDRAM Memory
40GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
32MB nVIDIA TNT-2 M64 AGP Graphics
16X IDE DVD-ROM Drive, 3.5" Floppy Drive
12x10x32 CD-RW Internal Drive (add $79)
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! Value
Deluxe ATX Tower Case
Altec Lansing AVS-500 5 spkr. Sound System
17" .27 N.I. Digital Monitor

AMD Athlon™processor

1GHz	$849
1.3GHz	$879
1.5GHz	$959

1.4GHz **$899**

*REGATA 7450MP

The 1.3GHz AMD Athlon™processor with enhanced 3DNow!™technology
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
128MB 133MHz SDRAM Memory
30GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
Integrated S3 Savage4 2D/3D Video Accelerator
Integrated PCI 3D wavetable Stereo Sound
56X Max IDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Stereo Microphone and 240W speakers
Deluxe Micro ATX Tower Case
17" .27 N.I. Digital Monitor

1GHz	$699
1.2GHz	$719

1.3GHz **$739**

***SYSTEMS INCLUDE:**
- MS Windows XP Home & IE 6.0 — or MS Windows ME & IE 5.0
- 104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
- McAfee Virus Scan for MS Windows
- COREL WordPerfect Suite2002, and 155 CD Titles w/Encyclopedia
- 3 YEARS Limited Parts & Labor Warranty

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MicroProGov Contract #: GS-35F-0448J Check us out!

*LANscape MP 3360 Dual | AMD Server

The DUAL 1.2GHz AMD Athlon™MP processors
TYAN s2462UNG Dual Processor Server Board
Full Tower server chassis w/460W P.S.
256MB DDR ECC Memory
55.2GB Three (3) 18.4GB Ultra-160 SCA SCSI Hard Drives
ADAPTEC 2100S RAID5 Controller 32MB RAM
48X Max IDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
Four Hot-Swap SCA SCSI drive bays
Integrated Ultra-160 (320) SCSI drive bays
DUAL 3COM 10/100+ LAN Controller
On-board ATI Rage XL Video Adapter
104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
3-year parts, 3-year on-site warranty
MS Windows 2000 Server (5-user) (add $799)

Dual 1.2GHz **$2459**

*Business Lease as low as $98.00

*LANscape MP 1600 Dual | AMD Server

The DUAL 1GHz AMD Athlon™MP processors
TYAN s2460 Dual Processor Server Board
Full Tower server chassis w/300W P.S.
256MB DDR ECC Memory
160GB Two (2) 80GB Ultra-100 7200RPM Hard Drives
PCI Ultra ATA100 RAID Controller
48X Max IDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
3COM 10/100+ LAN Controller
16MB AGP Video Adapter
104-key PS/2 Keyboard & PS/2 Mouse
3-year parts, 3-year on-site warranty
MS Windows 2000 PRO (add $159)

Dual 1GHz **$1439**

*Business Lease as low as $60.00

*Caledon 8100MP

Students Choice

1GHz AMD K7 Duron™processor w/Enhanced 3DNow!™ technology
2 Universal Serial Bus (USB) Ports
128MB 133MHz SDRAM Memory
20GB Ultra100 IDE Hard Drive
Integrated S3 Savage4 2D/3D Video Accelerator
Integrated PCI 3D wavetable Stereo Sound
56X Max IDE CD-ROM, 3.5" Floppy Drive
56K PCI Data Fax Modem v.92
Stereo Microphone and 240W speakers
Deluxe Micro ATX Tower Case
15" .28 N.I. Digital Monitor

AMD Duron™ processor

900MHz	$639
950MHz	$659

1GHz **$689**

GSA Federal Supply Schedule — MicroProGov Contract #: GS-35F-0448J Check us out!

Microsoft OEM System Builder Program MEMBER 2001

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AMD Athlon

DDR MEMORY

$379 BARGAIN AMD

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- **16x DVD-ROM Drive**
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- 56K V.90 Fax/Modem & 10/100 Ethernet
- 400 Watt PMPO Subwoofer Speaker System
- Win98 Keyboard & Scrolling Internet Mouse
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39
- MS Windows ME CD & Manual - add $89
- 17" Digital SVGA Monitor, .27mm - add $155
- 100MB Internal ZIP Drive - add $49
- IEEE-1394 Fire Wire w/software & cable - add $39

AMD DURON	800	$ 379	(bgsp111)
AMD DURON	900	$ 399	(bgsp112)
AMD ATHLON	900	$ 409	(bgsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 419	(bgsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 429	(bgsp115)

$635 AMD BEST BUY

- **VIA KT-133A UDMA-100 4x AGP MB**
- 256MB PC133 SDRAM
- 40GB Ultra DMA-100 Hard Drive
- 56x CD-ROM Drive
  upgrade: 16x DVD-ROM @ $35
  upgrade: 16x10x40 CD-Rewritable @ $65
- 32MB nVidia Riva TNT2 M64 4x AGP Video
- AC97 Stereo 3D Sound
  upgrade: Sound Blaster Live! Value @ $39
- 56K V.90 Fax/Modem w/Voice
- 17" Digital SVGA Monitor, .27mm
  upgrade: 19 Digital SVGA Monitor .26mm @ $89
- 400 Watt PMPO Subwoofer Speaker System
  upgrade: Altec Lansing ACS33 Speakers @ $30
- PS2 Win98 Keyboard & Scrolling Internet Mouse
- MS Windows XP or ME (Millennium) Edition
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 635	(abbsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 645	(abbsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 655	(abbsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 665	(abbsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 695	(abbsp115)

$955 DREAM 2001

Jan, Feb & Mar 2001 BEST BUY Awards

- **VIA KT-133A UDMA-100 4x AGP MB**
- **512MB PC133 SDRAM**
- 60GB Ultra DMA-100 Hard Drive
- **16x10x40 CD-Rewritable**
- **16x DVD-ROM Drive**
- 64MB nVidia GeForce-2 MX400 4x AGP Video
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Live! Value
  upgrade: Sound Blaster Audigy MP3+ @ $69
- **IEEE-1394 Fire Wire 3 Ports PCI Card**
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- 19" Digital SVGA Monitor, .26mm
- PS2 Win98 Keyboard & Scrolling Internet Mouse
  upgrade: MS Optical Intelli-Mouse @ $27
- **7 Pieces 1000 Watt Surround Sound Speaker**
- MS Windows XP or ME Edition
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- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 955	(drsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 965	(drsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 975	(drsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 985	(drsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 1015	(drsp115)

$1379 NIGHT DREAMER

- **DDR 266FDB UDMA-100 Main Board**
- **Black Enermax Mid Tower Case**
- **512MB DDR PC2100 SDRAM**
- 60 GB Ultra DMA-100 HDD
- **64MB nVidia GeForce-3 nFinite Video**
- Sound Blaster Live! Value
  upgrade: S.B. Audigy Platinum @ $159
- 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- **20x10x40 CD-Rewritable Drive**
- **IEEE-1394 Fire Wire 3 Ports PCI Card**
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- **Black 19" Digital SVGA Monitor, .26mm**
- Black ALTEC LANSING ACS54 Speakers
- **Microsoft Optical Explorer Mouse**
- Black PS2 Win98 Keyboard
- MS Windows XP or ME (Millennium) Edition
- **Free COREL Office 2002 & Norton 2001 CD**
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 1379	(nigsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 1389	(nigsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 1399	(nigsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 1409	(nigsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 1439	(nigsp115)

$865 BACK TO SCHOOL

Sep 2000 Computer Buyer's Guide BEST BUY

(www.ibuypower.com/product-pc/back-to-school.htm)

- **DDR 266FSB UDMA-100 Main Board**
- **512MB DDR PC2100 SDRAM**
- 40GB Ultra DMA 100 HDD
- 16x10x40 CD-Rewritable Drive
- **64MB nVidia GeForce-2 MX400 AGP Video**
- AC97 Stereo 3D Sound
  upgrade: S.B. Live Value @ $39
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- 19" Digital SVGA Monitor, .26mm
- PS2 Win98 Keyboard & Scrolling Internet Mouse
  upgrade: MS Optical Intelli-Mouse @ $27
- **7 Pieces 1000 Watt Surround Sound Speakers**
- MS Windows XP or ME (Millennium) Edition
- **Free Corel Office 2002 CD**
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39
- 16x DVD-ROM - add $59

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 865	(btsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 875	(btsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 885	(btsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 895	(btsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 925	(btsp115)

$969 MP3 PRO

- **DDR 266FSB UDMA-100 Main Board**
- **512MB DDR PC2100 SDRAM**
- 40GB Ultra DMA-100 HDD
- 16x10x40 CD-Rewritable Drive
- **64MB ATI Radeon DDR Video w/VIVO**
- Sound Blaster LiveValue
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- 19" Digital SVGA Monitor, .26mm
  upgrade: **19" REAL FLAT** .22mm Monitor @ $99
  upgrade: 19" ViewSonic E90 .23mm @ $99
  upgrade: 19 ViewSonic GS790 .22mm @ $179
- PS2 Win98 Keyboard & Scrolling Internet Mouse
  upgrade: MS Optical Intelli-Mouse @ $27
- **7 Pieces 1000 Watt Surround Sound Speakers**
- MS Windows XP or ME (Millennium) Edition
- **Free Corel Office 2002 CD**
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39
- 56x CD-ROM - add $29

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 969	(mpsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 979	(mpsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 989	(mpsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 999	(mpsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 1029	(mpsp115)

$1015 GAMER'S PRO

(www.ibuypower.com/product-pc/gamer-pro.htm)

- **DDR 266FSB UDMA-100 Main Board**
- **512MB DDR PC2100 SDRAM**
- 40GB Ultra DMA-100 HDD
- 16x DVD-ROM
- 16x10x40 CD-Rewritable Drive
- **64MB nVidia GeForce-2 GTS PRO DDR Video**
  upgrade: 64MB GeForce-3 nFinite @ $199
- Sound Blaster Live! Value
  upgrade: Sound Blaster Audigy Gamer @ $69
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- 19" Digital SVGA Monitor, .26mm
  upgrade: **19" REAL FLAT** SVGA .22mm @ $99
- **ALTEC LANSING AVS500 5 Pieces Speakers**
- **Microsoft Intelli Mouse** ; PS2 Win98 Keyboard
- MS Windows XP or ME Edition
- **Free Corel Office 2002 CD**
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 1015	(gpsp111)
AMD ATHLON	1.2 GHZ	$ 1025	(gpsp112)
AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 1035	(gpsp113)
AMD ATHLON	1.4 GHZ	$ 1045	(gpsp114)
AMD ATHLON	1.5 GHZ	$ 1075	(gpsp115)

$1255 GAMER'S DREAM

Apr 2000 PC Gamer Editors' Choice Award

- **DDR 266FSB UDMA-100 Main Board**
- **512MB DDR PC2100 SDRAM**
- **60GB Ultra DMA-100 HDD**
- 16x DVD-ROM Drive
- **20x10x40 CD-Rewritable Drive**
- **IEEE 1394 Fire Wire 3 Ports PCI Card**
- **64MB nVidia GeForce-3 nFinite Video**
- Creative Lab Sound Blaster Live! Value
  upgrade: Sound Blaster Audigy Gamer @ $69
  upgrade: Sound Blaster Audigy Platinum @ $159
- 56K V.90 Fax Modem w/Voice
- 19" ViewSonic E90 .23mm SVGA Monitor
  upgrade: 19" ViewSonic GS790 .22mm @ $80
- **ALTEC LANSING AVS500 5 Pieces Speakers**
- **Microsoft Intelli Mouse** & PS2 Win98 Keyboard
- MS Windows XP or ME Edition
- **Free COREL Office 2002 CD**
- One Year On-Site Warranty - add $39

AMD ATHLON	1.0 GHZ	$ 1255	(gdsp111)
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Intel CELERON	1000	$ 505	(hosp112)
Intel Pentium III	866	$ 565	(hosp113)
Intel Pentium III	933	$ 585	(hosp114)
Intel Pentium III	1000	$ 595	(hosp115)

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Intel Pentium 4	1.6 GHZ	$ 795	(pbbsp112)
Intel Pentium 4	1.7 GHZ	$ 825	(pbbsp113)
Intel Pentium 4	1.8 GHZ	$ 875	(pbbsp114)
Intel Pentium 4	2.0 GHZ	$ 1165	(pbbsp115)

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Intel Pentium 4	1.7 GHZ	$ 895	(vasp113)
Intel Pentium 4	1.8 GHZ	$ 945	(vasp114)
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AMD ATHLON	1.33 GHZ	$ 899	(dvdsp113)
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Intel Pentium 4	1.7 GHZ	$ 999	(p49sp113)
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MOBILE

GATEWAY SOLO 3450

A Fully Flexible Notebook For the Indecisive

ZDNet BEST BUY

IT'S AN ULTRALIGHT! IT'S A BUDGET DESKTOP REPLACEMENT! No, it's the $2,449 Gateway Solo 3450, a classy fusion of form and function that's as light on your wallet as it is on your shoulders. The two-piece package, comprising a 3-pound, one-spindle notebook (meaning it houses the hard drive, but no floppy or optical drive) plus a 2.6-pound, two-spindle dock (which includes the optical and floppy drives), offers features and flexibility at a price usually reserved for a notebook alone.

The notebook part of the package comes well-equipped, with a 750MHz Pentium III processor, 192MB of RAM, and a 20GB hard drive. It offers all the ports you'd need during travel: USB, VGA, flip-out RJ-11 connector, and IEEE 1394 (FireWire). It also has a proprietary network connector to which you attach the included RJ-45 dongle. We applaud the easy-to-reach—and clearly marked—panel for memory upgrades. A mike and headphone jack sit in the front of the unit, next to the single speaker.

The 3450's solid, bright, and crisp 12.1-inch TFT display is standard for ultraportables. A 12.1-inch screen is the smallest available that's still usable for long periods—but it's still a bit undersized if you plan to use the 3450 as a full-time system. We easily drove an external monitor at 1,600-by-1,200 resolution, as well as both the LCD and external monitor at the panel's native 1,024-by-768 resolution. If you frequently use an external monitor, however, heed one warning: The notebook's VGA connector lacks screws for securing the VGA cable.

Disconcertingly shallow travel mars an otherwise well-laid-out keyboard, which includes a semi-isolated T-shaped cursor pad and surprisingly large keys. But given the notebook's size and weight, we can't really condemn the keyboard's feel. A no-frills two-button touch pad rounds out your input options.

The 3450 easily snaps into its dock. To remove it, you hit an Undock button (which essentially tells the OS you're removing the drives) and pull two latches. The dock contains loud but somewhat tinny-sounding speakers, two more USB ports, a parallel port, a PS/2 keyboard/mouse port, an RJ-45 network jack, and an RCA-style NTSC TV connector. Because the notebook has nothing in the back—all the ports are on the front and sides—the dock doesn't block access to anything. That's good design.

The two drive bays in our evaluation unit came with an 8x/8x/24x CD-RW drive and a floppy drive, the standard configuration. You can also choose to have a DVD-ROM drive go in the 5.25-inch bay for $100 less than configuring the notebook with the CD-RW drive. Unfortunately, the system lacks a DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo-drive option. The 3.5-inch bay can take a second storage device—hard drive, Zip drive, or floppy drive. You must turn off and undock the notebook to swap drives. The docking unit itself fits across the bottom of the 3450 in approximately the same footprint, while adding an inch to the system's overall height.

At 5.6 pounds including the dock, the 3450 remains quite portable even while docked. Unfortunately, the system won't support a second battery. Its battery life, slightly less than 3 hours, is average for an ultraportable but underpowered for a system with an optical drive. You may want to spend $199 for an additional, high-capacity battery.

Overall, the 3450's performance ranked as average for its class, though that's still plenty fast for almost any use you'd put it to other than gaming or rendering animation files. A standard three-year parts-and-labor warranty earns Gateway some extra points.

You may want to consider some accessories, such as a $99 power adapter for auto or airplane use, a $99 Targus carrying case designed for the Solo 3450, or a $159 wireless-networking PC Card. (The Gateway RG-1000 Access Point wireless networking hub will run you an additional $299.) You can also bump up the memory to 320MB for an extra $150, or add a 250MB USB Zip drive for $179.

Clearly, Gateway made some trade-offs to put together this package at such a competitive price. But trade-offs are inevitable, and at least the company made them in the right places. A few niggling imperfections—average performance, only one PC Card slot, and support for only a single battery—earn this lightweight some dings. But overall, it's a great package.

—*Lori Grunin*

EDITORS' RATING 7.8

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	8
EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	7
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	8
VALUE	8

Dock included; light; nice design; good price

No screws on VGA connector; only one PC Card slot; drives not hot-swappable; only supports a single battery at a time; no combo-drive option

DIRECT PRICE: $2,449

AS TESTED: 750MHz Pentium III; 192MB 100MHz SDRAM; 20GB hard drive; 8x/8x/24x CD-RW drive; S3 Savage/IX graphics controller with 8MB video RAM; 12.1-inch TFT XGA (1,024-by-768) LCD; ESS Allegro PCI sound chip; integrated V.90 modem; integrated 10/100mbps Ethernet; Windows Me; Microsoft Works Suite 2001

COMPANY: Gateway
San Diego, CA
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www.gateway.com

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Best Buy, Computer Buyer's Guide, September 2001

"The Athlon Mega 2 is a powerful system that will appeal to gamers or anyone else who needs high performa.
Best Buy, Computer Buyer's Guide, August, May 2001

August, July & June 2001 Athlon Force 2
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January 2001 Athlon Ultra 2
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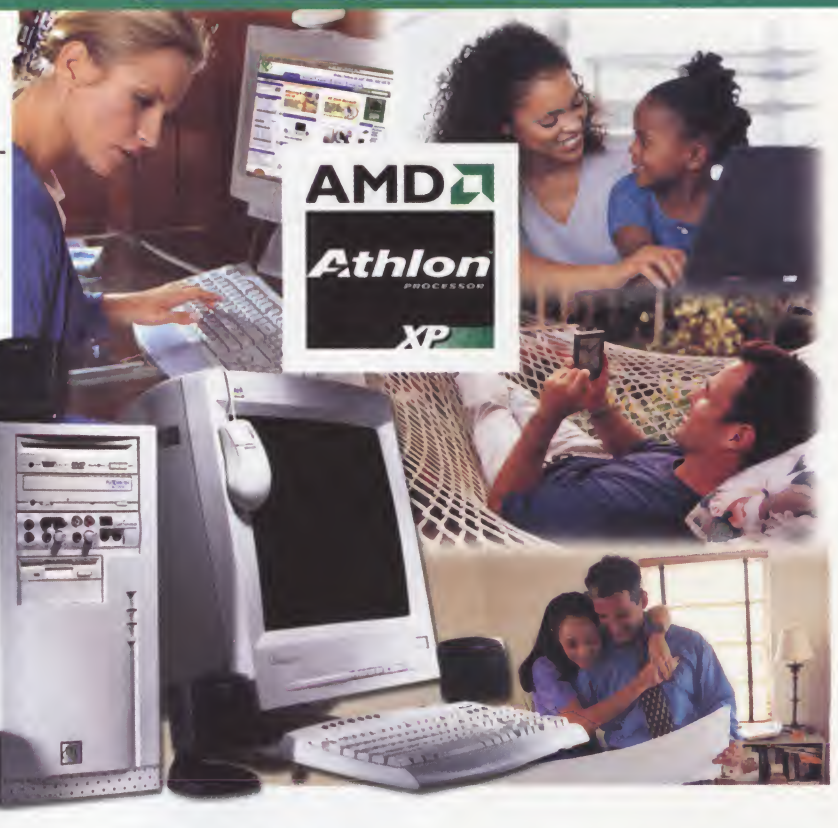

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AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+[1] **$1159** #A206

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[2] **$1099** #A207

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.8GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.533GHz.
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz

Athlon Ultra 2

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- 60GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM715 19" .26 SVGA Color Monitor
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- Plextor 24X10X40 CD-Rewritable Drive
- Nvidia GeForce 3 64MB 4X AGP Video Card w/TV-Out
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! Platinum Audigy Sound Card
- Klipsch ProMedia 5.1 THX Surround Sound Speaker System
- US Robotics 56K V.90 Hardware Fax Modem
- 3Com 905 10/100 Ethernet Card
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+[1] **$1979** #A218

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[2] **$1919** #A217

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.8GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.533GHz.
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz.

Athlon Mega 1

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- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
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- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! 5.1 Sound Card
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- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem
- Add 16X10X40 CD-Rewritable Drive @$95
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[1] **$959** #A227

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1600+[2] **$929** #A226

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz.
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.6GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.40GHz

Athlon Mega 2

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- Inwin ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt (AMD Certified)
- 256MB PC2100 DDR Memory
- 40GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM715 19" .26 SVGA Color Monitor
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- Nvidia GeForce 2 MX 4X AGP 64MB Video Card w/TV-Out
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! 5.1 Sound Card
- Altec Lansing AVS500 5-Piece Speaker System
- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem
- Add 3Com 905 10/100 Ethernet Card @$49
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+[1] **$1169** #A238

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[2] **$1109** #A237

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2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz

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- 20GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM615 17" .27 SVGA Color Monitor
- 52X CD-ROM Drive
- Nvidia TNT2 M64 w/32MB 4X AGP Video Card
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! 5.1 Sound Card
- Altec Lansing AVS300 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[1] **$899** #A257

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1600+[2] **$869** #A256

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.6GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.40GHz

Athlon Special 2

- AMD Athlon™ XP FSB266 DDR 4X AGP M/B
- Inwin ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt (AMD Certified)
- 128MB PC2100 DDR Memory
- 30GB Ultra ATA100 Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM615 17" .27 SVGA Color Monitor
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- Nvidia GeForce 2 MX 4X AGP 32MB Video Card w/TV-Out
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! 5.1 Sound Card
- Altec Lansing AVS300 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem
- PCI 10/100 Network Card, Broadband Ready
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1800+[1] **$999** #A268

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1700+[2] **$939** #A267

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.8GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.533GHz
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.7GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.47GHz

Athlon Force 1

- AMD Athlon™ XP FSB266 DDR 4X AGP M/B
- Inwin ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt (AMD Certified)
- 128MB PC2100 DDR Memory
- 20GB Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM615 17" .27 SVGA Color Monitor
- 52X CD-ROM Drive
- ATI Xpert w/32MB AGP Video Card
- Integrated Onboard Creative Sound
- Altec Lansing AVS300 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem; 10/100 Network Card
- Optional One-Year On-site Service @$29

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1600+[1] **$829** #A278

AMD Athlon™ XP Processor 1500+[2] **$799** #A275

1QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.6GHz processors. QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.40GHz.
2QuantiSpeed™ architecture outperforms competitive 1.5GHz processors QuantiSpeed™ architecture operates at 1.33GHz.

Athlon Force 2

- AMD Athlon™ XP FSB266 DDR 4X AGP M/B
- Inwin ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt (AMD Certified)
- 128MB PC2100 DDR Memory
- 20GB Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Hitachi CM615 17" .27 SVGA Color Monitor
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- Nvidia TNT2 M64 w/32MB 4X AGP Video Card
- Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live! 5.1 Sound Card
- Altec Lansing AVS300 Speakers w/Subwoofer
- ZOOM 56K V.90 Fax Modem; 10/100 Network Card
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MOBILE

I/OMAGIC NEO JUKEBOX 2200

Magically Master Your Music Collection

THE 6GB STORAGE CAPACITY OFFERED BY PORTable MP3 players such as Creative Labs' Nomad Jukebox seems impressive, especially considering that flash-memory-based players such as Intel's Pocket Concert Audio Player hold only 128MB. But I/OMagic has one-upped the competition with the $349 Neo Jukebox 2200. The Neo Jukebox stores music on a 20GB hard drive, providing space for more than 600 complete albums in MP3 format.

It's easy to set up, too. Simply run the installation program, connect the player to a USB port, and you're done. Windows treats the unit as a removable hard drive, and you copy files just as you do with any disk drive. In fact, the Neo Jukebox can store any type of file, serving as a general-purpose portable hard drive with fast transfer speeds. The Neo Jukebox supports folders, so you can arrange your files in a hierarchical order, as well as standard M3U playlists. It can't play Windows Media files, although it does have upgradable firmware for future updates.

The Neo Jukebox is better suited to sedentary than portable use. The 4.8-by-5.6-by-1.1-inch unit (HWD) is too large to wear on your belt or slip into a pocket. For home use, I/OMagic includes a small remote control, as well as a line-out connector on the device for hooking up your stereo receiver. The backlit LCD is large, but it doesn't provide much information at one time. The Neo Jukebox runs on AC power or a rechargeable lithium-ion battery, which offers about 4 hours of playback.

Sound quality was clear and bright across all frequencies, though a bit harsh at the high end. We did notice some background hiss when we turned up the volume. Four equalizer presets let you alter the sound, and you can adjust bass and treble levels and save them as a user preset.

The I/OMagic Neo Jukebox 2200's 20GB capacity puts other hard drive-based jukeboxes to shame. It won't fit in your pocket, but it will make a fine addition to your home entertainment center.

—*Ken Feinstein*

EDITORS' RATING 7.2

RATED 1 TO 10

DESIGN	7
EASE OF USE	7
FEATURES	8
PERFORMANCE	8
SOUND QUALITY	6
VALUE	7

Huge storage capacity; folder and playlist support; includes remote control; fast transfer rates

Relatively large; slight background hiss during audio playback; no Windows Media support

DIRECT PRICE: $349

COMPANY: I/OMagic
Santa Ana, CA
888-999-0743, 714-953-3000
www.iomagic.com

ZDNet Price It! 34811

For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

SPRINT PCS SCP-6000

Wafer-Thin and Cutting-Edge

THOUGH THE ULTRATHIN $299 SPRINT PCS SCP-6000 isn't going to amaze anybody who's visited Japan in the last two years, it's sure going to impress anyone who hasn't. At 2.3 ounces, it's currently the lightest mobile phone in the United States and perhaps the most distinguished-looking.

First, you'll notice this handset's ultrathin profile. It measures 5.1 inches by 1.5 inches by a mere 0.4 inch. But make no mistake: The SCP-6000, manufactured by Sanyo Consumer Electronics, is a full-length, candy-bar-style phone that fits in a shirt pocket.

The sharp, backlit green or orange screen is nice, too. At the default font setting (you can choose among four sizes), the display shows eight lines of text. Browsing the wireless Web is a relatively enjoyable experience, and the one-touch Web access gets you up and surfing quickly.

Though it lacks a color screen, the SCP-6000 has virtually the same features as the more expensive SCP-5000. These include voice-activated dialing, voice memo, Caller ID, a four-way rocker navigation key, a vibrating ringer, voice mail, the Crab Catcher game, a calendar, a world clock, and a calculator. You can choose among 17 ring tones, including a distinctive crowing rooster.

At times, the 1.9GHz-band CDMA SCP-6000 seemed to lack the signal strength of other Sprint PCS phones. Most of the time, however, we were able to place and receive calls even when the phone's signal-strength measure barely showed one bar.

Call quality is good, but battery life is subpar. With judicious use of the backlight, we came close to the rated 2.25 hours of talk time in our tests using the Sprint PCS network in New York City, but we managed to get only about half (75 hours) of the rated standby time of 160 hours.

For some, those drawbacks, as well as the lack of analog roaming, will be forgivable. The price may be less so: At $299, the SCP-6000 is one of the more expensive Sprint PCS models currently available. But compared with the cost of other phones with cutting-edge designs, the price isn't outlandish.

—*David Carnoy*

EDITORS' RATING 7.2

RATED 1 TO 10

ACCESSORIES	7
BATTERY LIFE/CHARGE TIME	4
FEATURES	8
LOOK AND FEEL	10
VALUE	7

Small; stylish; wide array of features

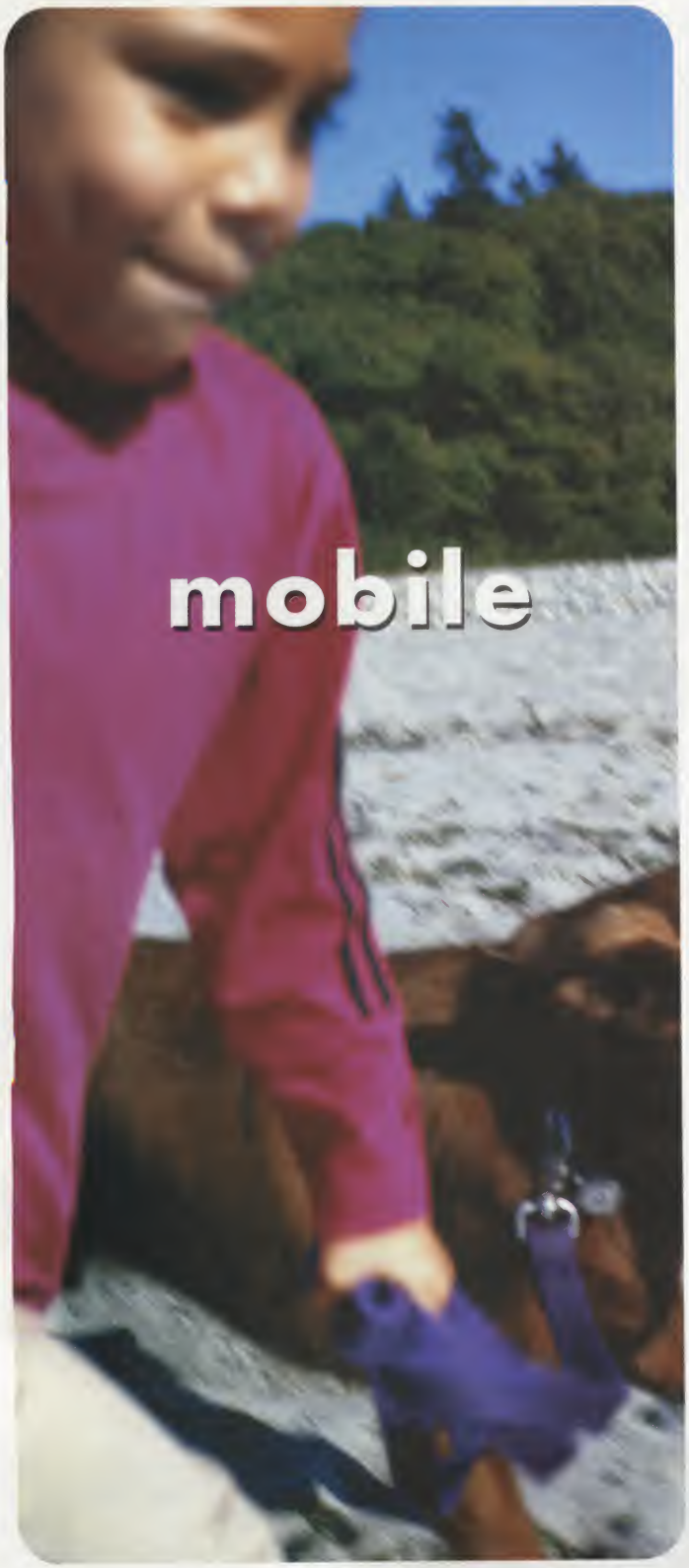
Battery life too short; no analog roaming

PRICE: $299

COMPANY: Sprint PCS
Kansas City, MO
800-480-4727
www.sanyo.com

ZDNet Price It! 34551

For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.



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SOFTWARE

DISKEEPER 6.0 SECOND EDITION

Defrag Your Disk The Easy Way

ZDNet BEST BUY

EXECUTIVE SOFTWARE INTERNATIONAL'S $49.95 Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition attacks performance-killing fragmentation with a strong arsenal of tools. It offers improved performance and algorithms over the previous version, as well as automated scheduling and defrag-during-boot technology. The detailed help and accessible user interface make it possible for all levels of users to defragment drives quickly.

Although Diskeeper supports Windows 95, 98, and Me, it really shines on Windows NT 4.0- and 2000-based systems, and offers capabilities not found in built-in disk defragmenters. The $259.95 Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition Server handles everything the workstation version does and adds the ability for system administrators to defrag over the network.

Diskeeper also enables third-party utilities to move files safely while the system is busy. The new defrag engine runs quickly and unobtrusively. Improved algorithms do a better job than competitive products and require fewer system resources. Diskeeper analyzes fragmentation data to achieve a balance between performance and fragmentation. For example, by leaving a large file in two pieces, Diskeeper can save huge amounts of processing time and resources with a minimal impact on performance.

You can set Diskeeper to track fragmentation between runs and then defrag when it reaches a given threshold. Windows NT and 2000 users can use Frag Guard to monitor and prevent fragmentation of critical system files—master file table (MFT) and memory-paging files—by allocating extra space for them before they expand. Boot Time technology safely optimizes system files that normally can't be moved while the machine is in use by cleaning them up while the system is booting. We also like the ability to analyze multiple drives or partitions at a time. In fact, the only thing we didn't like is that while Diskeeper runs from the Microsoft Management console, you need to use the Windows Event viewer to see detailed logs.

Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition is a great value. It delivers dynamic, inconspicuous, and preemptive tools to keep your hard drive running at its best.

—*Jay Munro*

EDITORS' RATING 8.8

RATED 1 TO 10

EASE OF USE	9
INSTALLATION	9
SUPPORT AND UPDATES	8
VALUE	9

Fast; works in background; easy to use; safe

No direct link to event log from the application

DIRECT PRICE: $49.95 (PACKAGED VERSION); $44.95 (DOWNLOAD)

REQUIRES: Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, or NT 4.0 Workstation

COMPANY: Executive Software International Burbank, CA 800-829-6468, 818-771-1600 ***www.execsoft.com***

ZDNet Price It! 34752

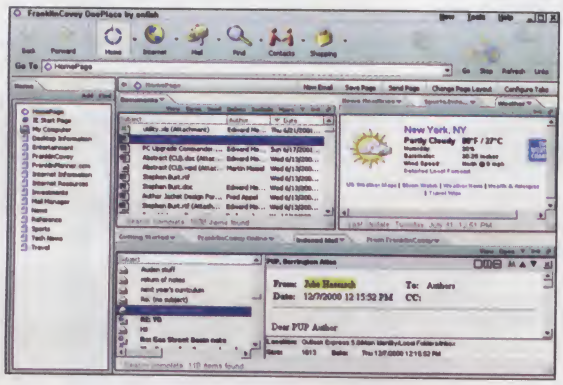
For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

FRANKLINCOVEY ONEPLACE

Unified Interface Lacks Organizational Skill

THINK OF YOUR HARD DRIVE AS A HAYSTACK, AND of FranklinCovey OnePlace, which combines a PIM and a disk indexer, as a high-speed needle finder. After installation, it spends an hour or two indexing all the documents and e-mail messages on your disk (and, optionally, on network drives), then continues to index files in the background as they're added.

You can search for old documents or messages and read them in OnePlace's built-in viewer. As a PIM, OnePlace acts as a front end for the Windows Address Book, Outlook, Outlook Express, and AOL, so you can send e-mail and manage contacts and appointments directly from OnePlace. The contacts and mail are stored and sent in Outlook or Outlook Express, so they're available even when OnePlace is closed.



The program uses a single interface to display all the information about any subject. When you click on a contact name, OnePlace displays your e-mails and documents about that contact, and a set of buttons brings up maps of the contact's neighborhood, lists of nearby restaurants, and so forth. Internet links automatically display information about companies, weather, and news reports—as well as online ads for "featured companies" such as Martha Stewart Living and Gap.

If OnePlace worked reliably, it would be indispensable. Unfortunately, it crashed repeatedly on our otherwise stable Windows 2000 system and, even when it worked, was plagued with glitches. For example, the compare-prices feature described in the manual produces only the Barnes & Noble.com price for books and CDs. And if you don't use Outlook, you can't use the appointment tools—but the documentation never tells you that.

The OnePlace software can automatically update itself from the Internet, and perhaps these problems will be fixed by the time you read this. But if you're one of the highly effective people for whom FranklinCovey designs its diaries and planners, you may want to wait until the company gets the bugs out.

—*Edward Mendelson*

EDITORS' RATING 6.8

RATED 1 TO 10

EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	9
PRODUCTIVITY	4
VALUE	6

Indexes documents, contacts, and e-mails; tight integration with existing PIMs and e-mail software; finds online information related to data *on your disk*

Frequent crashes and lockups; product searches hard to focus; price comparisons for books and music list only one vendor

DIRECT PRICE: $69.95

REQUIRES: 300MHz or faster Pentium-class processor; 64MB RAM; 50MB to 100MB hard drive space; Windows 98, Me, 2000, or NT 4.0

COMPANY: FranklinCovey Salt Lake City, UT 800-819-1812, 801-975-1776 ***www.franklincovey.com***

ZDNet Price It! 34751

For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

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SOFTWARE

Recognizably Good Scanning Software

These two OCR packages offer excellent performance and undeniable convenience—at markedly different prices.

IF YOU HAVE A SCANNER, IT PROBABLY CAME WITH OPTICAL CHARACTER recognition (OCR) software, an application that lets you turn scanned documents into editable text. Those who rely on OCR might want to consider upgrading to a more robust package, which can provide a range of valuable features such as customization, batch processing, and file-export options. We took a look at two OCR applications, ABBYY U.S.A. Software House's FineReader 5.0 Pro and ScanSoft's OmniPage Pro 11, both of which are excellent choices. FineReader just happens to cost $400 less.

FINEREADER 5.0 PRO

EDITORS' RATING **8.0**

EASE OF USE	7	PRODUCTIVITY	8
FEATURES	8	VALUE	9

PROS: Excellent spell-checker; high accuracy; few unflagged errors; flexible PDF-output options; inexpensive
CONS: Weak results with low-resolution images

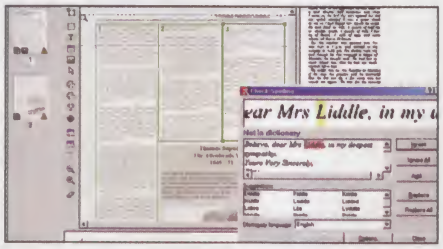
ZDNet BEST BUY

You've probably never heard of the $99 FineReader 5.0 Pro, but this low-price Russian powerhouse is loaded with first-class features. Simple enough for beginners and automated enough for corporate use, ABBYY's FineReader OCR package has a slightly rough-edged interface but performs as well as or better than OmniPage.

FineReader uses the now-standard OCR interface that lets you choose between fully automated and fully manual operation. As in OmniPage, you can navigate among multiple pages by clicking on thumbnail images.

Export support includes all major file formats. When saving to PDF, you can choose among a more flexible set of options than in OmniPage. You can also tell FineReader to recognize facing-page images scanned from books as separate pages, not as multiple columns.

In any OCR package, the interactive spell-checker is where you get down and dirty with your scanned images, and FineReader's spell-checker is cleaner than



that of any other OCR package. When you correct a word-recognition error, you work in an editing window that includes the full text flow of the region you're correcting, so you can also fix errors in nearby text.

FineReader produced final output comparable to that of OmniPage Pro. With many test images, FineReader flagged more doubtful readings than OmniPage Pro, adding to the time required for proofing but producing fewer errors. FineReader was also more effective when sorting multicolumn documents into single-column text. The program was weakest when working with low-resolution images of newspaper text.

A few rough edges in the interface don't get in the way of FineReader's power and convenience. Download FineReader's trial version; even if you use a rival package now, you may never look back.

OMNIPAGE PRO 11

EDITORS' RATING **7.0**

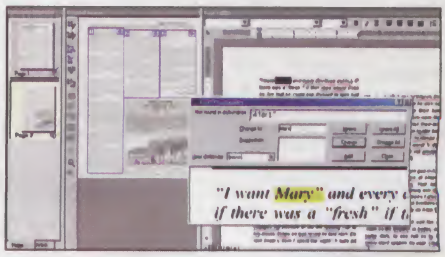
EASE OF USE	7	PRODUCTIVITY	8
FEATURES	7	VALUE	6

PROS: High accuracy; flexible PDF output options; scheduler for unattended jobs
CONS: Spell-checker corrects only one word at a time; expensive

ScanSoft's OmniPage Pro ranks as the best-known, most respected OCR package on the U.S. market—although FineReader threatens to shoulder it aside. Why? At $499.99, OmniPage Pro 11 costs five times as much as FineReader, while providing roughly the same power and less convenience for manual correcting. Still, corporate users will appreciate OmniPage's unique built-in scheduler for unattended batch jobs.

OmniPage's wizard interface either performs all the stages of scanning, reading, and saving automatically, or walks you through the process of manually scanning pages, selecting zones of text and images, and saving to an output file. The fine-tuned recognition engine purred along smoothly, with minimal errors in most of our test files but with a tendency to leave errors unflagged when working with difficult text images. OmniPage accurately saved complex multicolumn layouts when exporting to Microsoft Word, but in single-column format, it inserted footnotes into the middle of the text.

Up-to-date features include the ability to output to Adobe's Acrobat PDF format, with or without the original scanned image, and a new spreadsheet-style list of processed pages for easy management of complex jobs. Other enhancements are just catch-ups to FineReader, such as a training feature that automatically corrects multiple instances of the same misread word. Unfortunately, certain features seem trapped in an earlier software era. The spell-checker confusingly displays uneditable text in a large window, forcing you to correct errors in a tiny box.



The new PDF output makes OmniPage Pro 11 an attractive upgrade. But if you're starting out with OCR or upgrading from the limited software that came with your scanner, try FineReader before you pay the high price for OmniPage.

—Edward Mendelson

< PRODUCT SUMMARY >

EDITORS' RATING RATED 1 TO 10	8.0	7.0
PRODUCT	FineReader 5.0 Pro (BEST BUY)	OmniPage Pro 11
COMPANY	ABBYY U.S.A. Software House Fremont, CA 877-328-2229, 510-226-6717 *www.abbyyusa.com*	ScanSoft Peabody, MA 888-781-1189, 978-977-2000 *www.scansoft.com*
REQUIRES	133MHz Pentium or faster processor; 32MB RAM; 40MB hard drive space; Windows 95, 98, Me, or 2000, or NT 4.0 with Service Pack 3 or later	Pentium or faster processor; 32MB RAM; 115MB to 170MB hard drive space; Windows 95, 98, Me, 2000, or NT 4.0
DIRECT PRICE	$99 34772	$499.99; $149.99 (upgrade from any OCR software) 34757

00000 = ZDNet Price It! For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

WEB SERVICES

ORBITZ

Does Airline Megasite Ground the Competition?

ORBITZ IS MORE THAN JUST AN UPSTART TRAVEL site—it's owned by five of the largest airlines: American, Continental, Delta, Northwest, and United. Using its market-share muscle, Orbitz has signed agreements with most other airlines, guaranteeing access to the lowest fares. While the Department of Transportation explores the antitrust implications, Orbitz is thriving.

To see whether Orbitz lives up to its impressive pedigree, we compared Orbitz to Expedia and Travelocity.com on three different flights. For two reservations, all three sites displayed the same lowest fare. Travelocity offered the lowest fare on the third reservation. The three sites split honors for finding the most flights. In theory, Orbitz should be able to find lower prices than its competitors, but in our unscientific trials, we found no real advantage.

We did prefer Orbitz's interface to that of Expedia or Travelocity. The search results are laid out in a grid that makes it easy to sort the flights by price, airline, number of stops, departure time, and shortest flights. Best of all, the essential data for each flight is shown in a minimal amount of space. Even though Orbitz's database consists of 450 airlines and 2 billion fares, a typical search took less than 30 seconds.

The after-sale support is equally strong. While competing sites offer travel alerts via e-mail or pager, Orbitz adds a toll-free phone line for flight updates. The site also offers reservations for hotel rooms and car rentals, as well as discounts on cruises and travel packages, but these sections didn't provide any significant benefits over the other travel sites.

Although we had a slight preference for the Orbitz interface, we found ourselves checking all three sites before making a purchase—just in case one turned up a lower fare.

—*David English*

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

RATED 1 TO 10

EASE OF USE	9
FEATURES	7
PERFORMANCE	8
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	7
VALUE	7

Informative, uncluttered interface; fast searches; toll-free phone line for flight updates

Sections unrelated to flights have fewer features

PRICE: FREE

COMPANY: Orbitz
Chicago, IL
888-656-4546, 312-894-5000
www.orbitz.com

ZDNet Price It! 34755

For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

DOTPHOTO

Showcase Your Digital Snapshots

PLENTY OF PHOTO SITES MAKE IT EASY FOR YOU TO share photos online and convert them to traditional prints. In this crowded market, each site is trying to establish an identity. DotPhoto has several standout features that make it worth a visit.

Like its competitors, DotPhoto has a free side and a pay side. You can store and display photos for a year without paying a fee. After that, you'll have to upload and store at least one photo a month, or spend at least $5 on prints over a six-month period. DotPhoto charges 29 cents for a 4-by-6-inch print. The same-size print at rivals Ofoto and Shutterfly costs 49 cents. DotPhoto also offers a 25 to 30 percent discount if you commit to a set number of prints each month. At press time, the site was offering new members 60 free 4-by-6-inch prints.

Another DotPhoto advantage is the ability to annotate your Web-based photos with spoken narrative. DotPhoto claims to be the first to offer this feature. The annotation process is easy. After downloading several components to your browser, you record your narrative, upload the sound file, and associate the file with your photo. Also, you can add captions, then search for photos by caption text.

Like Shutterfly, DotPhoto lets you track your print orders online, as well as import e-mail and street addresses from Microsoft Outlook. However, DotPhoto does not allow for shipping to multiple addresses on the same order the way Shutterfly does. It also lacks Ofoto's online editing tools, making the site better suited to users who already own, and prefer to use, offline photo-editing software.

Its low-cost prints and voice-annotation feature make DotPhoto a clear winner, even though it falls just short of the competition in its photo sharing and display features.

—*D.E.*

EDITORS' RATING 7.8

RATED 1 TO 10

EASE OF USE	8
FEATURES	6
PERFORMANCE	8
SERVICE AND SUPPORT	8
VALUE	9

Free photo storage and display; low-cost prints; voice annotation; can search photos' caption text; can track print orders online

Lacks online editing tools; can't ship to multiple addresses on the same order

PRICE: FREE; PHOTO PRINTS REQUIRE A FEE

COMPANY: DotPhoto
W. Trenton, NJ; 609-434-0340
www.dotphoto.com

ZDNet Price It! 34754

For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

GAMESPOT

THE CORPORATE MACHINE

Your Ship Has Sales

EDITORS' RATING 8.4

World domination through cola: That's the focus of The Corporate Machine, a real-time strategy game from Stardock that expands on themes first presented in the company's 1997 cult hit, Entrepreneur. Imagine swapping infantry units for traveling sales reps and cannons for marketing campaigns,

and you'll have a good idea of what awaits you here.

You start your climb up the corporate ladder by choosing a name for your fledgling enterprise, a product to represent, and a business specialty (laboring skill, marketing, or engineering). Your goal is to build a global empire and amass enough sales to become the undisputed leader in your field. Opposing you are up to seven computer-controlled businesses that have the same goals as you, so don't expect your success to come easily. Cola, cars, aircraft, and computers make up the available merchandise, and the basic selling principles remain the same whether you're shilling for the latest in gas-guzzling SUVs or a hip soda laced with caffeine.

Frequent random events are spiced with goofy stories that lend personality to what could have been a dry experience. On the downside, both the game's interface and manual are byzantine—the former because of a complex jumble of graphs and the absence of pop-up tips, and the latter because of horrendous organization and a lack of specifics.

Still, these are minor shortcomings when contrasted with the game's many positive attributes. With its winning design, powerful artificial intelligence, and great sense of humor, The Corporate Machine ranks as one of this year's best strategy games. **—Brett Todd**

(Take-Two Interactive Software; $19.99 34810 ***www.corporatemachine.com)***

MAX PAYNE

Payne and Pleasure

EDITORS' RATING 9.2

ZD Net BEST BUY

Created by Finnish developer Remedy Entertainment, Max Payne is a gritty third-person shooter clearly inspired by the stylish cinematography of the Hong Kong action-movie genre and the work of director John Woo in particular. The game does have a few weaknesses: It isn't very long and lacks multiplayer features. But these are hardly serious detriments.

You play the title character throughout the game. Max is a modern-day New York undercover cop whose wife and infant daughter were brutally murdered and who has since been framed for a heinous crime. Thus begins his blood-soaked search for the truth—and revenge. The game has many superlative qualities, not the least of which is its outstanding gameplay. You use the keyboard to make Max run in any direction; control is smooth, simple, and responsive. By default, the left mouse button fires your weapons as rapidly as possible, and the right mouse button triggers Max's "bullet-time," which temporarily puts everything in slow motion, as in the 1999 film *The Matrix*.

The game's special effects are gorgeous. The effect of errant gunfire hitting glass and other environmental objects is completely convincing. But most of all, seeing bullets fly by in bullet-time is an incredible effect that never ceases to be thrilling.

Games that have been in development for an inordinate length of time typically wind up overwrought, incomplete, or behind the times. Once in a while, however, the extra time and effort put in by the developers pays off. That's the case with Max Payne. Its incredible technical accomplishments and original play mechanics combine to make this one of the finest shooters ever. **—Greg Kasavin**

(GodGames; $49.99 34769 ***www.maxpayne.com)***

MECHCOMMANDER 2

Taking It To the Mechs

EDITORS' RATING 7.7

The MechWarrior series popularized the notion of piloting giant robotic killing machines in first-person combat games, but the attempt in 1998's MechCommander to transfer mechs to the real-time-strategy genre met with limited success—a surprise, because the game was based on the BattleTech Universe, the epitome of strategic gaming. Now, exactly three years later, Microsoft has revamped the concept with MechCommander 2. In true BattleTech style, the game is all about improving your forces with new technology, equipping them with the right mix of weapons, and improving the skills of your pilots.

The original MechCommander had some serious shortcomings. You couldn't set waypoints, select units without clicking on them, or save during missions. Microsoft clearly heeded players' complaints, because these and other deficiencies have been addressed in the sequel. But whereas MechCommander's mechs were too passive, MechCommander 2 nudges them too far in the opposite direction: They'll engage enemies on sight, but if you lose track of a battle, you'll find some of your pilots wandering across the map, chasing enemies you hadn't even noticed.

The new game also shares some of the flaws that hindered its predecessor, including long (sometimes dreadfully so) load times and the lack of an efficient mech heat-management system, one of the prime tenets of the BattleTech world.

Nonetheless, although it may fall short of being the strategic equivalent of MechWarrior 2, MechCommander 2 has enough going for it that only the most hard-core BattleTech fans will be disappointed. **—Bruce Geryk**

(Microsoft; $54.95 34806 ***www.microsoft.com)***

ANARCHY ONLINE

Marvelous Mayhem

EDITORS' RATING 7.6

Billed as the first "next-generation" online role-playing game, Funcom's Anarchy Online was one of the year's most eagerly anticipated titles. Unfortunately, when the game first shipped, dissatisfied customers flooded its official Internet message board with angry complaints about insecure registration servers, CD-key errors, and in-game bugs. Many of those issues have been resolved, although some significant problems remain.

Despite its flaws, Anarchy Online is an outstanding massively multiplayer game with innovative and enjoyable gameplay elements, distinctive-looking environments, excellent music, and myriad other admirable qualities. The story takes place some 30,000 years in the future on Rubi-Ka, a remote mining planet, in the middle of a conflict between a megacorporation and the planet's rebel insurgents. You can choose to ally yourself with the Omni-Tek corporation or the rebel clans, or play as an independent character. You can also change sides in the conflict, provided you can make it across enemy lines.

Anarchy Online looks fantastic. In fact, it's clearly the best-looking game of its type. It also offers an unprecedented amount of content geared specifically toward players who don't want to fight and loot all the time, and is open-ended enough to let players stage all sorts of social events, including fashion shows, rave dance parties, and more.

Buy the game now, and you'll likely encounter lag and frame-rate problems, and perhaps some registration snafus. But given the considerable progress made so far, it probably won't be long before Anarchy Online emerges as the very best online role-playing game around. **—Andrew Seyoon Park**

(Funcom; $49.99 34813 ***www.anarchy-online.com)***

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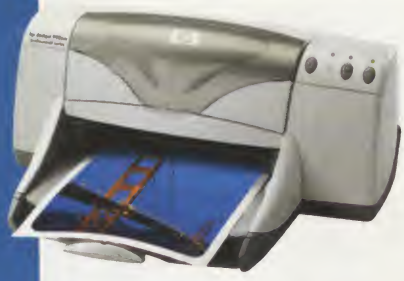

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AWARD-WINNING SYSTEMS

TOP 100 Products of 2001

The downturn in the nation's economy—and in the dot-com sector, in particular—fortunately did not slow the pace of innovation in computer technology. In fact, this past year was one of the best ever in terms of product selection, performance, and value, with desktop processors cracking the 2GHz mark, CD-RW drives spinning faster and costing less, and across-the-board improvements made with digital cameras, inkjet printers, and handheld PCs. Even the humble mouse—essentially unchanged since its introduction more than 20 years ago—has undergone a sweeping revision with the introduction of the world's first cordless optical mouse.

Once again, the editors at *Computer Shopper* and ZDNet have put their collective heads together to select the best technology and best buys from a year's worth of reviews and firsthand experience. (Our new Editor's Pick boxes even give the editors an opportunity to single out products they're particularly fond of.)

Of course, to appreciate the best, you should be familiar with the worst. To that end, we've invited back seasoned industry observer John C. Dvorak to give his picks for the Bottom Five of 2001.

It all adds up to an essential read for any savvy tech buyer. So whether you're in the market for a blazingly fast gaming system, a sharp-shooting digital camera, a pocket-size MP3 player, or a complete graphics-creation package, you've come to the right place.

desktops | notebooks | hardware | mobile products | software | games | web services

TOP 100

Desktop Systems

SLUGGISH PC SALES AND LOWER COMPONENT PRICES HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO A WIDE-OPEN, BUYER-FRIENDLY MARKET FOR DESKTOP COMPUTERS. FOR ABOUT $1,700, MOST VENDORS WILL LET YOU CONFIGURE A SYSTEM

that offers far better performance than last year's top-of-the-line desktops. Shell out more than that, and you're in dream-machine territory. Even sub-$1,000 systems pack true processing muscle. Best of all, direct vendors are learning that buyers are like snowflakes: No two are alike. As a result, online configuration forms provide more variety than ever, letting you tailor components, software, warranties, and even operating systems to meet your exact demands.

You can have the fastest desktop PC on the planet custom-built to your specifications—complete with incredibly thorough documentation and even your choice of colors—as long as you're willing to pay top dollar. We configured an **Alienware Area 51** with a 1.8GHz Pentium 4 CPU, 256MB of PC800 RDRAM, DVD and CD-RW drives, a GeForce3 graphics card, and tons of other high-end components for $3,020. Competitors offer similar systems for a bit less, but not with this attention to detail.

Alienware Area 51

Demanding users who want big-time components, solid performance, and video-editing connectivity options need look no further than the aggressively priced $2,728 **Gateway Performance 1800XL Deluxe.** A solid three-year warranty with one year of onsite service backs this killer 1.8GHz Pentium 4-based machine with 128MB of PC800 memory, an 80GB hard drive, and a 19-inch Mitsubishi flat monitor. You'll forgive the rather inefficient use of the five PCI slots because you gain three IEEE 1394 (FireWire) and four USB ports, as well as a GeForce3 graphics card with TV output.

Gamers, enthusiasts, and even home-business owners will relate to the benefits of the wonderfully well-rounded **Xi MTower SP,** a $2,374 1.33GHz Athlon-based screamer with 256MB of DDR SDRAM, a 64MB GeForce2 graphics card, and a 19-inch Optiquest monitor. Dual RAID-controlled 30GB hard drives work well for both business and pleasure, eking even more performance out of this already tricked-out benchmark buster. Xi's excellent Web site and incredible array of options give you the ability to further fine-tune your system to exact specifications.

Compaq has made great strides recently in pricing its desktop systems more aggressively without sacrificing technology or features. The **Compaq Presario 7000** is a case in point, with a 1.2GHz Athlon processor, 128MB of PC2100 DDR SDRAM, a fast 75GB hard drive, and a 19-inch monitor—all for just under $2,000. We also appreciate the unit's three IEEE 1394 and four USB ports (some conveniently located on the front of the system), although we'd recommend upgrading the speakers and warranty. Nonetheless, this is a great all-around system specially tuned for multimedia and video editing.

Like the Xi MTower SP, the **Polywell Poly 880KR** doubles as a business PC, thanks to its dual 40GB hard drives and RAID controller. Benchmark performance is top-shelf, graphics are stellar (thanks to a 64MB DDR GeForce3 graphics board), and your aesthetic sensibilities will be soothed by the case's handsome silver exterior. The system is fully loaded with features, including video-editing software and dual IEEE 1394 ports, so you'll find the $2,483 price to be fair. Upgrading to a three-year warranty, however, will set you back another $196.

Falcon Northwest's graphics-heavy, animé-style Web site suggests you're in serious gaming country. The company hand-tunes its systems specifically for excellent 2D- and 3D-graphics performance, which was borne out on our benchmark tests. We configured a smokin' **Mach V** with a 1.33GHz Athlon CPU, 256MB of DDR SDRAM, a fast 60GB hard drive, and plenty of high-end touches (including a CH Products F-16 Combat-Stick) for a budget-busting $4,003. A bit pricey, to be sure, but if you demand this kind of quality, you won't be disappointed.

If you're not necessarily looking for a Windows-based machine and budget isn't a primary concern, the **Apple Power Mac G4** is the graphics and video enthusiast's dream system. The revolutionary (but

TOP 100 — THE DESKTOP PICKS

- ABS AMD Web Special
- Alienware Area 51
- Apple Power Mac G4
- Compaq Presario 7000
- Dell OptiPlex GX150
- Falcon Northwest Mach V
- Gateway Performance 1800XL Deluxe
- NuTrend Duron Power 2
- Polywell Poly 880KR
- Xi MTower SP

ABS AMD Web Special

TOP 100

Notebooks

NOTEBOOKS HAVE UNDERGONE A REAL MAKEOVER IN THE PAST YEAR. IN FACT, MANY NOW LOOK MORE LIKE MINIATURE SPACESHIPS THAN COMPUTING DEVICES. THIS SEA CHANGE IN DESIGN PHILOSOPHY DOESN'T stop at aesthetics, either. Today's portables are more efficient than ever, replacing older features with new, forward-thinking ones and employing innovative strategies to fit higher-end capabilities and more power into the same (or even smaller) units.

For an exceedingly well-rounded desktop-replacement system, users of all stripes will appreciate Toshiba's $2,199-direct **Satellite 2805-S402,** a multimedia powerhouse with plenty of extras. With a built-in IEEE 1394 port, a lightning-quick GeForce2 Go graphics subsystem, a huge 15-inch screen, and powerful audio, this 850MHz Pentium III-based Satellite is up to almost any business or pleasure task you can throw at it. The battery life could be extended a bit, and the notebook's keyboard could use some tweaking, but overall, you're going to love what you see.

Three grand may seem like a lot to spend on a notebook computer, but when you check out the thin-and-light **WinBook X1,** you're looking at an incredible bargain. This inch-thick 1GHz Pentium III-based laptop comes in only three standard configurations, the most advanced of which includes a 13.3-inch display, 320MB of RAM, and a DVD/CD-RW combo drive. The sleek exterior and well-designed interior make a great visual impression, and performance and connectivity are both solid. The one-year standard warranty can be upgraded to three years for only $99.

Weight or features—that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler to suffer the heft of yon desktop-replacement system, or take along fewer features and by doing so relieve backache. With the $2,549 **HP OmniBook 500,** you can have the best of both worlds. This sleek, 3.7-pound ultralight features a 12.1-inch display, a 600MHz Pentium III CPU, all the connectivity you'll need, and even a very usable (if slightly downsized) keyboard. Snap on the lower slab to add additional ports, optical drives (in our case, a 6x DVD), and powerful Polk audio and speakers. With the OmniBook as an option, even Shakespeare would have gone on the road more.

Gateway Solo 3450

Bigger isn't always better, but in the case of the ***Gateway Solo 9550,*** it clearly is. Sporting a 15.7-inch SXGA screen, a 1GHz processor, a standard 256MB of RAM, and a 16MB ATI graphics chip, this $2,753 system delivers desktop-replacement-level features at a most attractive price. And despite that huge screen and swappable DVD/CD-RW combo drive installed in the multimedia bay, the system tips the scales at only 8 pounds. Gateway even includes a standard three-year warranty, which you

TOP 100 THE NOTEBOOK PICKS

- Acer TravelMate 610TXVI
- Apple iBook
- Apple PowerBook G4
- Dell Inspiron 8100
- Gateway Solo 3450
- Gateway Solo 9550
- HP OmniBook 500
- IBM ThinkPad A Series
- Toshiba Satellite 2805-S402
- WinBook X1

expensive) SuperDrive lets you play back and record audio CDs, CD-ROMs, and DVDs, while your only display options are flat-panel LCDs. We configured our $4,006 model with an 867MHz PowerPC G4 chip, 256MB of RAM, a 17-inch display, and a three-year warranty. We're talking power here—and in a gorgeous package, to boot.

On the other hand, home-office and small-business types need a solid, no-nonsense system that's heavy on fundamentals and light on frills. For them, the $1,425 **Dell OptiPlex GX150** is one of the best in its class. In addition to its "pizza box" desktop design, the OptiPlex we configured included a 1GHz Pentium III CPU, 128MB of SDRAM, a basic 17-inch monitor, and a 16MB nVidia graphics card. Dell recommends Windows 2000 and Microsoft Office Small Business for small-business users, and includes three years of same-day onsite service.

Students, computing newbies, and other budget-minded consumers will flip over the amazing value found in the **NuTrend Duron Power 2,** which packs some nifty features into a sub-$1,000 box. Solid components, including a 950MHz Duron processor, 128MB of 133MHz SDRAM, and a 30GB hard drive, led to great scores on our benchmark tests. Also, NuTrend includes both DVD-ROM and CD-RW drives, as well as a 32MB nVidia TNT2 graphics card and a three-piece speaker system for added multimedia muscle. True, Windows 98 and Corel Office 2002 are the only included software packages, and the minitower case leaves almost no room for expansion. But at this price, who's complaining?

In direct competition with the NuTrend system is the **AMD Web Special** from ABS, arguably an even better bargain and certainly a faster performer. Budget-conscious gamers will love the system's killer 3D scores, thanks to its 32MB GeForce card with TV-out and dual-monitor support. This 900MHz Athlon-based midtower desktop also comes packed with loads of extras, including DVD-ROM and CD-RW drives, a 7,200rpm 40GB hard drive, 128MB of RAM, a 17-inch Hitachi monitor, and a satellite-subwoofer speaker system. We configured it with a three-year warranty (including an optional first year of onsite service) for only $1,097. ▼

For additional product information, see p. 122.

Notebooks

can upgrade to onsite protection for an additional $199.

Its stealth-bomber aesthetics and industry-leading keyboard haven't changed in several generations, but IBM's ThinkPad line keeps getting better. The **ThinkPad A Series** of midsize desktop-replacement systems, priced from $1,299 to $2,919, garners praise both for delivering lightning-quick performance (with processor choices up to a 1GHz Pentium III) and for featuring all sorts of innovations. We love the UltraPort connector above the spacious screen (up to 15 inches at UXGA native resolution), which lets

Apple PowerBook G4

you connect a CompactFlash reader, Bluetooth module, or digital camera. Some models feature integrated wireless LAN capability, while the ThinkLight keyboard light and built-in composite-video output are nice extras.

A budget desktop-replacement system with the personality of an ultralight: That's what you get with the $2,199 ***Gateway Solo 3450***, an affordable and exceedingly sleek 3-pound notebook with a standard 2.6-pound, two-spindle multimedia dock. With a 750MHz Pentium III, 192MB of RAM, a 10GB hard drive, and an 8MB video subsystem, the Solo delivers top performance for an ultraportable. Add the docking base with its standard floppy drive, CD-RW drive, and stereo speakers, and you still have an acceptably portable all-in-one notebook. We relish the economical port design here, too: The notebook itself features USB, modem, Ethernet, VGA-out, and IEEE 1394 connectors. A three-year standard warranty is a welcome extra.

A model of business-computing innovation and design, the sleek, two-spindle **Acer TravelMate 610TXVi** delivers excellent battery life, a large 14.1-inch screen, and a forward-thinking complement of ports, including dual USB connectors and a Fast IR transmitter. Corporate network administrators will gravitate to this $1,849 system, thanks in large part to its built-in wireless-networking capability (offered as a standard feature) and its hardware-based security that employs smart-card authentication. Don't let the 1.3-inch thickness fool you—there's plenty of horsepower here, including an 800MHz Pentium III CPU and 8x DVD drive. Despite the notebook's lackluster performance on our graphics benchmark tests, DVD playback still looked excellent.

Smaller, lighter, and faster than the original, the newest version of the **Apple iBook** remains the high-water mark of portable-computer design. Weighing only 4.9 pounds and clad in shock-resistant polycarbonate plastic, the iBook dispenses with legacy features in favor of a streamlined, futuristic layout. A 12.1-inch XGA display, 8MB graphics subsystem, and 500MHz PowerPC G3 CPU come standard on all basic models, while RAM and optical drives (with choices all the way up to a combo DVD/CD-RW model) change as you spend more. Performance, video playback, and battery life are all excellent, while built-in IEEE 1394 capability and preloaded editing software make for an excellent video-manipulation platform. Prices range from $1,299 to $1,799.

Arguably the best-looking notebook ever designed, the **Apple PowerBook G4** "Titanium" delivers even more in the way of features and performance. A nonstandard 1,152-by-768 screen, measuring 15.2 inches diagonally, is longer and narrower than most and is better-suited for letterboxed video and viewing dual-page Photoshop layouts. Clad almost entirely in brushed-silver titanium, the PowerBook is not only attractive but highly durable. Up to a 500MHz G4 processor and 256MB of RAM (1GB maximum) come standard, as does DVD-ROM. (No DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive was available at press time.) Base prices range from $2,599 to $3,997. ▼

WinBook X1

EDITOR'S PICK

Dell Inspiron 8100

The new Dell Inspiron 8100 may just be the best desktop-replacement notebook since the legendary ThinkPads of a few years back. I configured my 1.13GHz Pentium III-M system with a DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive, a 15-inch SuperXGA+ display, a 32MB GeForce2 Go graphics subsystem, 256MB of RAM, and a 30GB hard drive—all for under $3,000. With an 8.1-pound travel weight, the Inspiron 8100 is no ultraportable. But with this much performance, I can handle it.

—Brian Bennett, staff editor

HP OmniBook 500

TOP 100

Mobile Products

IT'S BEEN A FEW YEARS SINCE WE GOT ALL WARM AND FUZZY OVER OUR FIRST MP3 PLAYER AND WEB-SURFING CELL PHONE. BUT THOUGH OUR present-day expectations may be substantially higher, we're no less awed by the increasingly sophisticated art of miniaturization, as manifested by this year's top mobile products.

Not only is the **Compaq iPaq H3650 Pocket PC** one of the snazziest handheld devices you're likely to see, it's also one of the most powerful, with a 206MHz Intel StrongARM processor and 32MB of memory. The $499 device's 240-by-320-pixel screen displays 4,096 crisp colors, while its tapered silver case leaves competing designs in the dust. Four one-touch buttons give you access to common applications, and a five-way navigation button doubles as a speaker. Expansion is handled through proprietary "sleeves" that slide around the back and sides of the device.

Kyocera QCP 6035 Smartphone

Based on Motorola's speedy 33MHz Dragonball VZ processor, the **Handspring Visor Platinum** is the fastest Palm OS-based device we've seen. Featuring a sleek metallic look and a comfortable 5.4-ounce weight, it ships with 8MB of internal memory and a 160-by-160-pixel screen that displays 16 shades of gray. It may not break a lot of new ground, but this $199 device has the power and aesthetics to woo executives away from their Palm Vx units.

After failing with its initial foray into the handheld arena, Sony got it right on the follow-up. The $499.99 **Sony CLIÉ PEG-N710C** combines the compact size and simple PIM applications of a Palm OS device with the power of a Pocket PC. Based on the same 33MHz Dragonball processor found in the Visor Platinum but featuring a reflective TFT color display with a 320-by-320-pixel resolution, the CLIÉ provides plenty of power and lots of flexibility. In addition to the standard Palm OS applications, Sony includes preinstalled modules for listening to digital audio and viewing still images and short videos on the unit's included 8MB Memory Stick.

TOP 100

THE MOBILE PICKS

- AVC Soul Player DMP-01
- Compaq iPaq H3650 Pocket PC
- HandEra 330
- Handspring Visor Platinum
- Intel Pocket Concert Audio Player
- Kyocera QCP 6035 Smartphone
- Motorola V.Series 60c
- M-Systems DiskOnKey
- Palm m105
- Sonicblue RioVolt
- Sony CLIÉ PEG-N710C

Intel Pocket Concert Audio Player

Our hands-down favorite for the easiest-to-view non-color handheld is the 5.9-ounce **HandEra 330.** Its crisp, 240-by-320-pixel gray-scale screen is capable of displaying in either portrait or landscape mode. The $349.99 HandEra is also easier to use than most other Palm OS-based handhelds, largely due to its jog wheel and hardware controls borrowed from the Pocket PC world. And its CompactFlash and Secure Digital slots won't leave you in need of expandability, either.

Combining a Palm OS-based handheld with a full-fledged wireless phone may seem like an ideal marriage, but the first implementation of this, Qualcomm's pdQ Smart Phone, failed unceremoniously. The **Kyocera QCP 6035 Smartphone** does a far better job of it, delivering a much sleeker 7.3-ounce device with tons of functionality, good reception, and excellent harmony between its two "personalities." Find a phone number in your Palm OS address book and tap on it—the phone automatically makes the call. The fully backlit screen is about 25 percent smaller than that of a standard Palm device, but you can increase icon and text size if you're having trouble reading the display. This $399.99 gem also gives you all the standard features—multiple ring tones, vibrate alert, voice dialing—as well

EDITOR'S PICK

Palm m105

I was seduced into buying a PDA by the nifty design and attractive price of the Palm m100, but I quickly discovered that its anemic 2MB of memory severely limited my handheld fun. Palm got it right with the m105, though. At a pleasing price of $199, it looks and feels the same, but with 8MB of memory, it can do pretty much anything its more upscale siblings can.

—Wendy Sheehan, managing editor

For additional product information, see p. 122.

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Dell | Home Desktops

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- Harman Kardon® HK-195 Speakers
- 56K[6] PCI DataFax Modem for Windows®

$899 or as low as **$27**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00456-501008

Recommended upgrades:
- 17" (16.0" vis) E770 Monitor, add $60
- 20GB Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200 RPM), add $20

Dimension™ 4300 Desktop

Advanced Performance, Smart Value
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.6GHz
- 128MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 40GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis, .28dp) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV-Out
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- SB Live! 1024 Digital Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-395 Speakers with Subwoofer
- 56K[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®

$1199 or as low as **$36**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00456-501011c

Recommended upgrades:
- 19" (18.0" vis) M991 Monitor, add $140
- 16x/10x/40x CD-RW Drive with Roxio's Easy CD Creator®, add $30

Dimension™ 8200 Desktop

Cutting-edge Technology
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.8GHz
- 128MB PC800 RDRAM
- 60GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 Hard Drive (7200RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis, .28dp) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV-Out
- 16X DVD-ROM Drive
- 16X/10X/40X CD-RW Drive with Roxio's Easy CD Creator®
- Turtle Beach Santa Cruz DSP Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-395 Speakers with Subwoofer
- 56K[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®

$1699 or as low as **$51**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00456-501016a

Recommended upgrades:
- 19" (18.0" vis) M991 Monitor, add $70
- 256MB PC800 RDRAM, add $110

Dell | Standard Features

Each DELL system shown here has a number of standard features, including:

- MS® Works Suite 2001 with MS® Money 2001 Standard
- MS® Windows® Me
- Dell Jukebox powered by MusicMatch
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty,[2]
- Dimension Desktops shown here include 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support
- Inspiron Notebooks shown here include 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]

Dell | Solutions

Software and Accessories

- Lexmark™ All-in-One Print, Fax and Scan, $199
- HP® DeskJet® 940C Printer, $99 after mail-in-rebate[30] (Reg. $149)
- Epson® Stylus C60 Printer, $69 after $20 mail-in-rebate[30] (Reg. $89). Offer ends 10/31/01
- HP® ScanJet® 4400Cse, $99 after $50 mail-in-rebate[30] (Reg. $149)

Service and Support

How about some peace of mind to accompany your new Dell™ system?

Dimension™ Desktop Service Upgrades:
- Upgrade Dimension™ Desktops with 1-Yr Ltd Warranty,[2] 1-Yr At-Home Service[4] to: 3-Yr Ltd Warranty,[2] 3-Yr At-Home Service[4] and 24x7 Lifetime Phone Support, add $119

Inspiron™ Notebook Service Upgrades:
- Upgrade Inspiron™ Notebooks with 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2] and 1-Yr Mail-in Service to: 3-Yr Ltd Warranty,[2] 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service[4] and 24x7 Lifetime Phone Support, add $219

Everything you'd ever want in a PC starts right here. Whether you're looking for high-performance multimedia to take on the road, or a versatile desktop that's perfect for home, Dell can custom-build a solution that is just right for you. And by making PCs to order and shipping direct instead of using a middleman retailer, Dell is able to give you the very latest technology at a low price, all backed by an award-winning service and support team that knows your PC like it's their own. So go online or call today, and discover a better way of finding, buying, and owning the perfect computer. A better way that's easy.

intel inside pentium 4

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VALUE

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Mobile Products

as more esoteric functions such as wireless e-mail, wireless Web access, and even fax capabilities.

Weighing only 3.6 ounces and housed in a lustrous metal casing, the **Motorola V.Series 60c** phone is the perfect combination of style and performance. Not only does its built-in microbrowser let you surf to stock quotes, sports scores, and the like on the phone's bright electroluminescent screen, it also features a small external LCD that displays Caller ID information without your having to flip the phone open. An updated user interface, along with standard features such as a 400-entry address book, two-way SMS messaging, and voice recognition, make the $500 V.Series 60c one of the most usable cell phones on the market.

The stylish though unassuming **Intel Pocket Concert Audio Player** may not look like one of the most powerful digital music players available, but with its 128MB of internal memory and eminently pocketable 4.3-ounce weight, the Pocket Concert serves up a uniquely compelling package. It supports both the MP3 and WMA formats, with upgradable support for emerging digital formats. In addition, the unit features USB connectivity, a built-in FM tuner with 10 presets, and an equalizer with 17 bass and treble settings. The $299 player also includes easy-to-use buttons and controls, and ships with a pair of comfortable, true-sounding wraparound earphones.

Its sleek, rounded design is no larger than the smallest portable CD players, but the **Sonicblue RioVolt** is no mere CD player. Besides playing conventional audio CDs, the $169.95 RioVolt can also play your MP3 collections on CD-R and CD-RW media. It also features a large, easy-to-read LCD that shows song-title and artist information, and delivers 40 seconds of shock protection in audio-CD mode. During playback, the CD stops spinning completely once the song has finished loading, making it virtually skip-proof.

Sony CLIÉ PEG-N710C

Featuring many of the same internal components as the RioVolt, the **Soul Player DMP-01** from AVC Technology hits all the important notes for a portable MP3/CD player, including upgradable firmware, WMA file support, an AC adapter, and a wired remote. It offers navigation by song title or artist, and also lets you organize your files into folders, which then appear on the $150 device's LCD panel. You'll even find a button that lets you skip ahead 10 tracks or to the next directory, depending on how long you hold it down. ▼

EDITOR'S PICK

M-Systems DiskOnKey

It looks like an ordinary key chain, but my M-Systems DiskOnKey is actually a portable 8MB storage device. It's also available in 16MB and 32MB capacities. The unit plugs into a USB slot and is immediately recognized by any Macintosh running Mac OS 9.0 or later, or a PC running Windows Me or 2000. (Windows 98 requires additional drivers.) Transporting and transferring my files has never been easier.

—Adam Fisher, editorial assistant

Hardware

THIS WAS A YEAR OF EVOLUTION AND TRANSITION FOR PC HARDWARE. PRODUCTS SUCH AS HARD DRIVES, DIGITAL CAMERAS, SCANNERS, AND GRAPHICS BOARDS CONTINUED TO IMPROVE AT A STEADY PACE. BUT other categories were enmeshed in dramatic shifts to new technologies such as recordable DVD, flat-panel monitors, and wireless networking. Both trends produced their share of excitement, and we were fortunate enough to have a ringside seat for the entire event. With the smoke finally clearing, here are our thoughts about some of the victors.

Writable DVD may one day make CD-R obsolete, but until that happens, products like Plextor's **PlexWriter 16/10/40A** are keeping the CD alive and well. This high-powered internal EIDE drive, which sells for just under $200, can record a 74-minute CD-R in less than 5 minutes and rip an audio disc in less than 3. But its most impressive feature is the sophisticated BURN-Proof technology that virtually eliminates disc-destroying buffer underruns.

More audacious is Sony's **Spressa CRX200E/A1** double-density CD-RW drive, the first CD recorder to support 1.3GB DD-R and DD-RW media. These double-capacity discs can be played only on compatible Sony drives, making them best suited for personal backup. But the CRX200E/A1 can also record legacy 650MB media, and at around $200 is priced to compete with comparable single-density models. DD-R and DD-RW probably have limited life spans, but they could easily tide us over until 4.7GB DVD recorders become affordable.

Another alternative is the **HP CD-Writer DVD Combo 9900ci.** Combining a 12x/10x/32x CD burner with an 8x DVD-ROM reader, the $180 CD-Writer costs less than purchasing two separate drives. It's also far easier to install and consumes only one external bay. Factor in HP's generous bundle of

media-management and backup applications, and you have a product that is cleverly designed and a bargain to boot.

If your removable-storage needs are covered but your hard drive is about to hang out a "No Vacancy" sign, point your browser to Western Digital's Web site and order a **Caviar WD1000BB** hard drive. With 100GB of space, this speedy 7,200rpm drive holds all your digital photos and music files, with plenty of room to spare. Priced at only $299 direct, that amounts to just under $3 per GB.

We were just as impressed by Seagate's ST340824A Barracuda ATA III, an amazingly fast, low-noise 7,200rpm 40GB drive. But the new $265 **Barracuda ATA IV** beats its predecessor in almost every way, offering 80GB of storage, utterly silent running, a breathtaking 69.3MB-per-second internal data rate and a record-setting 40GB-per-platter areal density. For high-bandwidth, noise-sensitive multimedia applications, there is simply no other choice.

TOP 100

THE HARDWARE PICKS

- Altec Lansing ADA890
- ATI All-in-Wonder Radeon
- Cornerstone c910
- Epson PhotoPC 3100Z
- Epson Stylus Photo 1280
- Gigabyte GV-GF3000
- Hercules Game Theater XP
- HP CD-Writer DVD Combo 9900cl
- HP ScanJet 7450c
- Klipsch ProMedia 4.1
- Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter
- Logitech Cordless MouseMan Optical
- Microtek ScanMaker V6UPL
- Mobility Electronics EasiDock USB 300F
- Nikon Coolscan IV ED
- Olympus Camedia C-3040 Zoom
- Olympus Camedia E-10
- Plextor PlexWriter 16/10/40A
- Samsung ML-1210
- Samsung SyncMaster 570vTFT
- SanDisk ImageMate
- Seagate Barracuda ATA IV
- SOHOware NetBlaster II
- Sony DCR-PC110 Digital Handycam
- Sony Spressa CRX200E/A1
- ViewSonic VG175
- Voyetra Turtle Beach Santa Cruz
- Western Digital Caviar WD1000BB

Altec Lansing ADA890

If you think all monitors are the same, take a look at the 19-inch **Cornerstone c910.** For just $269, this CRT offers a spacious 18-inch viewing area, a 0.22mm dot pitch, intuitive controls, great warranty options, and—last but not least—stunning image quality. It's hard to picture a better monitor for the price.

Even the best CRT isn't as sexy as a flat-panel monitor. But until recently, these high-tech displays have been hampered by kilobuck prices and limited availability. Enter Samsung's **SyncMaster 570vTFT,** a 15-inch LCD monitor that sells for about $436. Despite its lack of digital inputs, we loved the 570vTFT's crisp 1,024-by-768 image, easy setup, tiny footprint, and minuscule power consumption. We consider it the first truly cost-effective entry-level flat-panel monitor.

If you hate flying coach, you might prefer the **ViewSonic VG175,** selling for around $971. This 17.4-inch flat panel is a first-class offering, featuring stunning color, autodetecting inputs that let you toggle between two computers, and a terrific pivot feature that switches the screen between portrait and landscape orientation without rebooting. It's one of the few monitors we've seen that could actually wow us into parting with a thousand dollars.

A great way to drive either a CRT or flat-panel monitor is with the **ATI All-in-Wonder Radeon** AGP graphics accelerator. This multimedia-friendly 32MB card sells for around $213 and offers a slew of sophisticated TV-, video-, and DVD-oriented features, including a 125-channel stereo tuner, time-shifting video-recording software, and digital DVI video and S/PDIF audio outputs. It does everything else so well that it's easy to overlook its superior 2D- and 3D-graphics performance.

If you won't settle for anything less than the state of the art, you'll want a graphics board based on nVidia's pricey-but-muscular GeForce3 processor. One of the least expensive GeForce3 cards is the **Gigabyte GV-GF3000,** which, despite its $369 price, produced eye-popping results on our benchmarks. Even if it didn't offer extras like an S-Video-out port or a game bundle, the GV-GF3000 would be an exceptional choice for industrial-strength 3D gaming.

If you prefer to work with still images, you might want to take a peek through the viewfinder of the outstanding **Epson PhotoPC 3100Z** digital camera, which costs $713 on average. This 3-megapixel marvel is packed with an enormous array of features and controls. It includes a high-quality telephoto-to-wide-angle zoom lens and offers video- and sound-recording features. Even in the ferociously competitive digital-camera market, this digicam stands out from the crowd.

EDITOR'S PICK

Samsung ML-1210

After my 5-year-old laser printer gave up the ghost, I replaced it with the Samsung ML-1210. Rated at 12 pages per minute with a resolution of 600dpi by 600dpi, this $199 printer is the best deal I've seen in a while. My favorite feature is the easy-to-access Toner Save button. The 8MB of RAM isn't upgradable, and neither are the input and output trays, but at 150 and 100 sheets, respectively, they hold plenty for one or two users.

—Janice Chen, editor in chief

Another 3-megapixel contender that sells for just a few dollars more is the **Olympus Camedia C-3040 Zoom.** Like its 2-megapixel C-2040 predecessor, which received a rave review in our July issue, the $740 C-3040 combines a superbright f1.8 lens with sophisticated exposure options and features rivaling those of the Epson PhotoPC 3100Z. We know of no other camera in its class that can match its performance under less-than-perfect lighting.

Even more remarkable is the pioneering **Olympus Camedia E-10.** Touted as the world's first 4-megapixel digital SLR, the E-10 looks, feels, and operates like a traditional 35mm film camera, and offers all the exposure, focus, flash, and metering options you'd expect from professional

For additional product information, see p. 122.

Hardware

gear. Priced around $1,700, it's certainly not inexpensive, but this level of innovation doesn't come cheap.

Moving-picture fans may prefer to invest in the **Sony DCR-PC110 Digital Handycam** camcorder, which can record both high-quality digital video and 1,152-by-864 still images. It also offers comprehensive analog and digital I/O capabilities, as well as a broad array of intuitive controls and in-camera editing tools. It could be the easiest-to-use and most flexible sub-$2,000 Mini DV camcorder on the market.

Hewlett-Packard's **ScanJet 7450c,** selling for about $628, is a multipurpose powerhouse that lets you scan, e-mail, photocopy, fax, and run OCR jobs at the touch of a button. This revolutionary scanner also features dual 2,400dpi and 600dpi sensors that optimize speed and image quality at both high and low resolutions. Plenty of scanners excel in ease of use, performance, or output quality, but this is the one that does it all.

Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter

At the other end of the spectrum is Microtek's **ScanMaker V6UPL.** This economical 600-by-1,200dpi scanner outperformed pricier models in our speed and color-accuracy evaluations, and ships with luxuries such as dual USB/parallel interfaces, a 35mm-slide adapter, and an exceptional software bundle. With a selling price of about $122, it's a great buy for families, hobbyists, and small businesses.

The perfect complement for your ScanMaker is the **Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter,** which produces astonishing results when printing scanned images on glossy photo paper. This versatile little 2,400-by-1,200dpi inkjet is also easy to set up and operate, offers competitive print speeds, and ships with both USB and parallel interfaces, as well as Windows, Mac, and Linux drivers. For about $133, it's a bargain at twice the price.

If money is no object, an even better choice is the wide-format **Epson Stylus Photo 1280.** This blazingly fast prosumer inkjet prints stunning 13-by-19-inch photographic images at 2,880-by-720dpi resolution and can be used with archival media that remains colorfast for up to 25 years. Priced at about $467, this is one of the few inkjets on the market capable of meeting the needs of imaging professionals.

Equally uncompromising is the **Hercules Game Theater XP.** This innovative PCI sound card sells for approximately $137 and ships with a handy external I/O box that provides easy access to every imaginable type of connector, including multichannel analog and digital coaxial and optical outputs, discrete MIDI and game ports, independent headphone- and microphone-volume knobs, and even a four-port USB hub. We didn't notice a kitchen-sink connector, but just about everything else is there.

The **Voyetra Turtle Beach Santa Cruz** comes in a more conventional package but is nonetheless unique. With an average price of only $73, this surprisingly inexpensive sound board is built around a dynamic DSP that continuously reprograms itself on the fly to accelerate and optimize tasks such as DirectX audio playback, MP3 decoding, echo cancellation, effects processing, and MIDI synthesis. The result is an extraordinarily versatile multichannel board that doesn't bog down your computer.

A sound board is only as good as the speakers it drives, and few systems sound better than the THX-certified **Klipsch ProMedia 4.1.** This four-channel system for gamers produces bottomless bass, superior midrange detail, and a high end that seems to go on forever. Best of all, its 400-watt RMS amplifier pumps out volume levels that will leave even the most hard-core headbangers breathless. It's a lease breaker's delight for about $280.

Almost as loud and arguably even more accurate is the **Altec Lansing ADA890,** which costs around $287. This cleverly designed 5.1 system combines a huge subwoofer with four satellites that synthesize a virtual "phantom" front-center channel. The technique works remarkably well, producing strikingly realistic surround output from the extreme high end down to all but the lowest registers. Throw in the ADA890's refreshingly easy-to-use multichannel

EDITOR'S PICK

Nikon Coolscan IV ED

Not everyone needs a slide scanner, but those who do shouldn't have to spend $1,500 or more. I like the $899 Nikon Coolscan IV ED for its affordable, fast scanning of 35mm film and slides. It also integrates Applied Science Fiction's fabulous Digital ICE^3 technology for quickly removing dust and scratches, restoring faded color, and minimizing grain.

—Lori Grunin, senior editor, ZDNet

EDITOR'S PICK

SanDisk ImageMate

Transferring pictures from my digital camera to my PC used to be an exercise in frustration. But now, I simply insert my camera's CompactFlash card into this $29.99 USB device and easily access my images as if they were on a separate drive. I found the ImageMate soon paid for itself in the battery usage and time I saved by not downloading direct from the camera. Plus, SanDisk's tech support is top-notch.

—Steve Schwartz, senior editor

decoder, and you have what could be the best desktop-theater system on the market.

Another great idea is Mobility Electronics' **EasiDock USB 300F** universal docking station, which sells for $171 on average. In addition to standard mouse, keyboard, parallel, and Palm-compatible serial interfaces, this USB-attached port replicator provides a four-port USB hub, as well as SmartMedia, CompactFlash, IBM Microdrive, and Kensington-lock slots. No matter how often you upgrade, the EasiDock will be the last replicator you'll ever need.

Just as innovative is Logitech's **Cordless MouseMan Optical,** the first mouse to combine wireless and optical technologies in the same package. This nifty little critter, available for about $63, also features a high-resolution 800dpi sensor and battery-saving power-management features. It should even be available in a less expensive ambidextrous version by the time you read this.

If you want to make the rest of your home or office wireless, check out SOHOware's easy-to-install **NetBlaster II** line of 11mbps 802.11b networking products. Simply plug a NetBlaster II Access Point into a cable-modem, DSL, or network connection, and it will instantly link to any computer within 300 feet that's equipped with a NetBlaster II interface card. You can purchase all three of the components we reviewed—the NetBlaster II Access Point, PC Card, and PCI card—for under $470. Wireless networking was never easier. ▼

Samsung SyncMaster 570vTFT

Software

REPORTS OF THE IMMINENT DEATH OF SHRINK-WRAPPED SOFTWARE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN GROSSLY EXAGGERATED. ALTHOUGH SOME vendors, including audio-software specialist Sonic Foundry, plan to switch from traditional retail distribution to download-only sales, the boxed package still accounts for the vast majority of software sales.

One of our favorite family-oriented photo-editing packages is **Microsoft Picture It Photo Premium.** We love its customizable interface, jaw-dropping special effects, and ridiculously low $47 average price. The 2002 version gives you even more for your money, adding pop-up help videos, an enhanced Web Publishing wizard that posts your photos to the Web, and an expanded selection of templates, royalty-free images, mattes, and frames.

For a step up in sophistication, check out **Adobe Photoshop Elements,** an easy-to-learn photo-editing package that's far more powerful than the company's entry-level PhotoDeluxe offering and sells for about $87. This program has an intuitive interface, superior Web integration, and a robust selection of automated tools and filters, and it can even create animated GIFs and multi-image panoramas. You won't find a more powerful, flexible, and easy-to-use package for under $100.

If you're looking for an all-inclusive graphics package, look no further than **CorelDraw 10 Graphics Suite,** available for an average price of $461. In addition to the enormously powerful CorelDraw illustration package, the suite includes the Photoshop-class Corel Photo-Paint image-editing and painting program, as well as the Flash-like Corel RAVE vector-animation package. Toss in powerful page-layout, text, Web-publishing, and output capabilities, as well as a superb customizable interface, and it's easy to see why CorelDraw continues to impress us year after year.

Like its pioneering predecessors, Caligari's $299 **TrueSpace5** delivers stunning 3D-graphics and animation capabilities at a remarkably low price. In addition to a surprisingly intuitive toolset, advanced radiosity-rendering features, and an extensible plug-in architecture, it provides Shockwave3D, Director, and optional Flash export functions that make it one of the simplest and most cost-effective ways to generate

TOP 100 THE SOFTWARE PICKS

- ACDSee 3.1
- Adobe Acrobat 5.0
- Adobe Photoshop Elements
- Adobe Premiere 6
- BlackICE Defender 2.136
- Cakewalk Sonar XL
- Character Studio 3
- CorelDraw 10 Graphics Suite
- Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition
- Final Cut Pro 2
- FineReader 5.0 Pro
- Macromedia Dreamweaver 4 Fireworks 4 Studio
- Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2002
- Microsoft Picture It Photo Premium Edition 2002
- Microsoft Publisher 2002
- Opera for Windows 5.12
- PC Upgrade Commander
- Quicken TurboTax Deluxe
- Sound Forge 5.0
- Street Atlas USA 9.0
- TrueSpace5
- Windows XP Home Edition

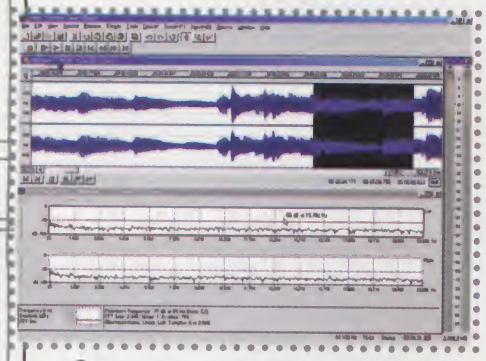
Adobe Photoshop Elements

For additional product information, see p. 122.

Software

interactive 3D Web content.

Of course, digital photos, sounds, videos, and images have a way of clogging up a hard drive. Organizing your files is half the battle, and for that there's ACD Systems' **ACDSee 3.1,** a nifty little viewer utility that displays or plays more than 40 types of image, video, and audio files. This $49.95-direct program offers batch processing, e-mail, and basic imaging-editing capabilities, but its strongest feature is the blinding speed with which it displays even the largest images.



Sound Forge 5.0

One of the handiest animation tools we've seen is Discreet's $1,495 **Character Studio 3.** Designed to plug into the company's $3,495 3DS Max 4 3D-animation program, Character Studio creates large groups of photo-realistic people, animals, or unearthly creatures that engage in complex activities like wandering, swarming, or combat. Anyone developing epic story lines for games, film, or video will find it an invaluable time-saver.

EDITOR'S PICK

Opera for Windows 5.12

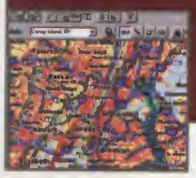
Friends raved about the Opera Web browser for years, so when the Norwegian company Opera Software finally came out with a free, ad-supported version, I gave it a try. It's customizable, intuitive, and fast. I'm hooked on the single-key keyboard shortcuts, integrated search pane, and seemingly endless customization options. While I wish Opera handled some plug-ins a little more smoothly, Internet Explorer is dead to me now.

—Kiersten Conner-Sax, staff editor

EDITOR'S PICK

Street Atlas USA 9.0

Planning road trips with DeLorme's Street Atlas USA is not only easy, it's fun. To map a route, I simply click on the green button to select the starting point and the red button to select my destination. The yellow button lets me add stops along the way. The program even allows me to opt for preferred routes, so I can highlight the roads I like to travel—or avoid.



—Nancy A. Lang, senior editor

After a brief stumble with version 5.1, **Adobe Premiere** is once again king of the cross-platform desktop video editors. In addition to numerous bug fixes, more reliable IEEE 1394 support, and new Web-output and real-time audio-mixing capabilities, the $550 version 6 seamlessly integrates with Adobe's After Effects, Photoshop, and GoLive applications. If you're already a Premiere aficionado, consider this latest version an essential upgrade.

The best Mac-only video-editing package hands down is Apple's own $999 **Final Cut Pro 2.** Any developer raised on stand-alone video workstations will appreciate Final Cut's comprehensive toolset, blazing speed, intelligent interface, multiple-monitor support, and rock-solid stability. Add a copy of Apple's DVD Studio Pro DVD-production software and a SuperDrive-equipped Power Mac G4, and you have a complete solution for creating and delivering digital video content.

Microsoft Publisher 2002, selling for $116 on average, is a great little page-layout program packed with timesaving wizards, a customizable Windows XP-style interface, and a huge library of templates, clip art, and coordinated font and color schemes. HTML compatibility and tight Office integration also let Publisher import, edit, and save Web pages and Word documents. It's a great choice for all but the most demanding desktop-publishing jobs.

If you think PDF files are strictly for online documentation, think again. **Adobe Acrobat 5.0** transforms Adobe's popular PDF document standard into a flexible and cost-effective file-sharing solution. This package, which costs about $220, lets online workgroups jointly edit, encrypt, and exchange secure files; define document-specific printing, annotation, and editing privileges; and use XML to merge files with metadata and forms data. Best of all, it integrates all these features into a coherent, familiar interface that most users will master in just a few minutes.

We can't think of a better choice for developing sophisticated, content-rich Web sites than **Macromedia Dreamweaver 4 Fireworks 4 Studio.** This $366 two-product package seamlessly integrates Macromedia's comprehensive Dreamweaver 4 Web-authoring software with the most recent version of its flexible Fireworks Web-graphics program. Designed for both hand-coded and WYSIWYG development efforts, it's a godsend for production staffers who must simultaneously write code and edit graphics on a tight schedule.

Don't be fooled by the label. The $739-direct **Cakewalk Sonar XL** is actually the latest version of the venerable Cakewalk Pro MIDI/audio-editing program. But the name change is understandable, given the program's huge number of powerful new features and generous bundle of plug-in utilities. No matter what kind of music project you undertake, this world-class multitrack music-production system will be the only software you'll need.

Equally impressive is *Sonic Foundry's* **Sound Forge 5.0.** This program, selling for around $265, now supports professional-quality 24-bit, 192KHz audio, and CD burning and ripping capabilities, as well as the Windows Media Audio (WMA) file format. A generous bundle adds some $800 of bonus Sonic Foundry software, including the Vegas Audio LE multitrack editor and 20 powerful DirectX effects plug-ins. We consider it the most powerful and flexible two-track audio editor on the market.

Intuit's $39.95 **Quicken TurboTax Deluxe** tax-prep software is packed with

painkilling features like a friendly interview-style interface, automated online data retrieval, bundled IRS publications, and even a tax-advice telephone hotline. If all this isn't enough, Intuit also throws in a free downloadable state-tax module and no-cost electronic-filing privileges. April 15 will never be a cause for celebration, but at least TurboTax takes away some of the sting.

Year after year, **Microsoft Encarta Reference Library** delivers an over-the-top collection of multimedia-enhanced articles, reference materials, and research tools. The 2002 version is no exception, featuring an interactive world atlas, links to loads of online resources, more than 60 years of archived articles, learning games, educators' lesson plans, and far too many other features to list here. It's one of the most comprehensive reference sources ever created, and it costs less than $70.

If the thought of migrating gigabytes of applications and data to a new PC makes you want to cry, check out V Communications' inexpensive **PC Upgrade Commander,** available for just under $50. This wizard-based application automatically transfers all your software and settings without making any changes on your old machine. Compatible with all versions of Windows since Windows 95, this easy-to-use utility pays for itself after only one use.

(continued on page 121)

EDITOR'S PICK

Windows XP Home Edition

I did the unthinkable: I installed a beta version of Windows XP without backing up any data or cracking a manual. Risky, yes, but Microsoft's new OS left me with no regrets. From its seductive interface to its retooled help menu, everything about XP is slick and intuitive. It's a cinch to set up, is compatible with most existing hardware and software, and fuses a logical user experience with flashy new touches. And after three weeks, it hasn't crashed yet.

—Rik Fairlie, editor

TOP 100

Games

THIS YEAR'S TOP GAME PICKS TILT HEAVILY TOWARD ROLE-PLAYING, PUZZLE, ADVENTURE, AND REAL-TIME STRATEGY (RTS) GAMES, WITH FEWER HIGH-INTENSITY FIRST-PERSON SHOOTERS, SPORTS, AND RACING TITLES.

We're not sure if this is the result of pressure on the gaming industry to reduce violence, or simply a cultural shift toward entertainment that exercises your brain more than your trigger finger. Regardless of the cause, we've come up with a baker's dozen of fresh titles that ought to include something for everybody, regardless of IQ or testosterone level.

TOP 100 — THE GAMES PICKS

- Age of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion
- Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal
- Black & White
- Clive Barker's Undying
- Command & Conquer Red Alert 2
- Emperor: Battle for Dune
- The Incredible Machine: Even More Contraptions
- The Longest Journey
- Majestic
- Myst III: Exile
- NASCAR Racing 4
- Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force
- You Don't Know Jack 5th Dementia

One of the freshest is Electronic Arts' **Majestic,** a truly interactive adventure game that literally places you in the center of a complex web of intrigue. Instead of running a canned program on a PC, players receive clues and messages at home through phone calls, faxes, instant messages, and e-mails that arrive at any time of day or night.

More conventional, but no less extraordinary, is the long-awaited **Myst III: Exile.** Like previous installments in this legendary series, Myst III slowly unfolds a hypnotic story line that leads you through a series of breathtakingly detailed alien worlds. We expect that its state-of-the-art 3D graphics, captivating puzzles, and complete absence of profanity and violence will make it an instant classic.

Another engrossing adventure game is Funcom's **The Longest Journey,** which tells the story of a young woman who can move between parallel worlds that threaten to collapse into our own. Graphics, soundtracks, and puzzles are all top-notch, but what really makes this title so addictive is its captivating, multilayered story line. Once you begin this journey, you won't want to walk away until you reach its startling, emotional conclusion.

Just as enthralling is Microsoft's **Age of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion.** As in earlier installments, the goal of this historically accurate real-time strategy game is to lead your civilization to world conquest. This major upgrade adds more civilizations and world leaders, as well as new technologies, game options, map types, and multiplayer capabilities that make gameplay more subtle and complex than ever.

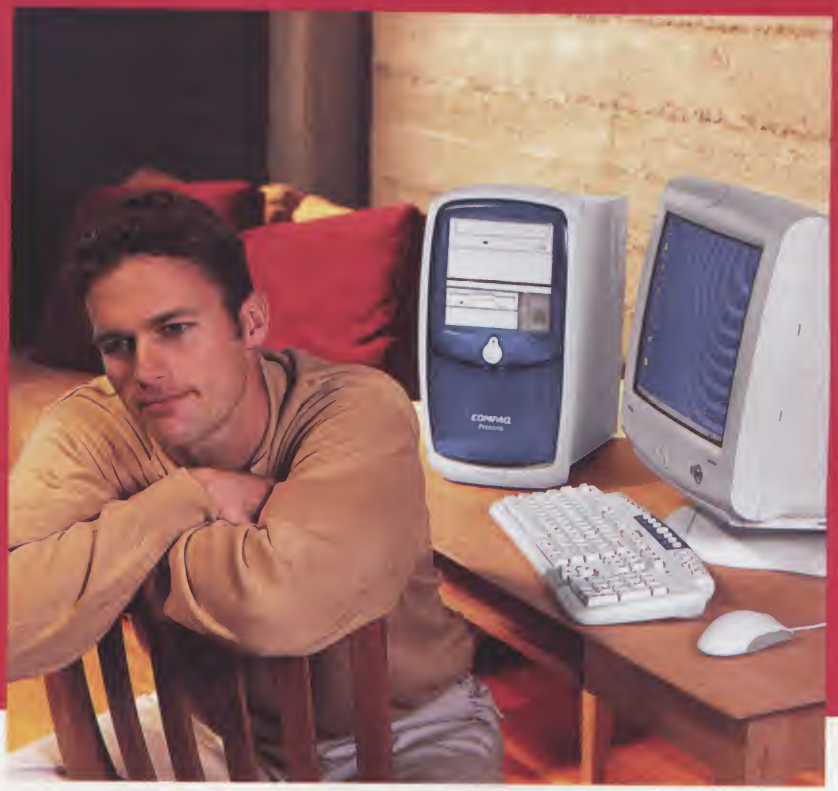
A more outlandish RTS game is **Command & Conquer Red Alert 2,** which takes place during a fictional Soviet invasion of the United States. Both sides use sci-fi weapons to wage fierce warfare that engulfs key American

(continued on page 120)

Black & White

For additional product information, see p. 122.

BUILT ON A RATHER SIMPLE, INNOVATIVE IDEA.



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Soundmax II Digital Audio
JBL Platinum Speakers with Digital Audio Port
16 MB nVidia Vanta
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Games

(continued from page 115)

cities and threatens to spill over into neighboring countries. With a superb interface, imaginative weaponry, and great multiplayer support, Red Alert 2 is a gripping experience for players of all skill levels.

For a truly out-of-this-world RTS experience, you can't do better than Westwood Studios' **Emperor: Battle for Dune.** Based on the sci-fi universe created by Frank Herbert in the *Dune* novels and the 1984 David Lynch movie, this game puts you in command of one of three factions battling for control over the desert world of Arrakis. The emphasis here is on fast, intense skirmishes rather than intricate tactics, an aspect helped along by the game's automated resource gathering. With its stunning 3D effects and engaging single-play and multiplayer modes, Emperor will lead you on a glorious conquest.

NASCAR Racing 4

Role-playing aficionados will be sad to hear that **Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal** is the concluding chapter of this popular series. But getting there will be half the fun, as players explore hidden corners of the Forgotten Realms and try to achieve what may be the highest levels possible in any Advanced Dungeons & Dragons game. This is one world that goes out with a bang.

Black & White is a completely different type of role-playing game that casts you in the role of an all-powerful god. The twist is that you can choose to be either a benevolent deity or a terrifying one, and the decisions you make have a profound effect on the world you create. It's one of the most sophisticated, polished, and downright interesting games of the year.

If high-octane shoot-'em-ups are more to your liking, you'll love **Clive Barker's Undying.** This disturbing first-person shooter makes great use of eerie graphics and a spine-chilling soundtrack to evoke the experience of being trapped in a haunted mansion. When combined with the game's ferocious two-handed combat system, Undying delivers what may be the most unnerving combat experience since the original Doom.

Equally intense is **Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force.** This no-holds-barred, first-person shooter uses the cutting-edge Quake III graphics engine to depict furious battles in locales such as the interior of a Borg cube and the familiar passageways of the U.S.S. *Voyager* itself. Forty terrific solo fight sequences and three multiplayer modes combine to make Elite Force one of the best *Star Trek* games ever.

Just as fast and furious is Sierra Online's **NASCAR Racing 4.** Like earlier NASCAR games, it features a generous selection of real-life drivers and cars, as well as an array of racing modes and viewing angles. Throw in radically improved, accurate vehicle physics, high-gloss graphics, and utterly convincing damage modeling, and you have what could be the most realistic racing sim ever.

Like Sierra's first two Contraptions titles, **The Incredible Machine: Even More Contraptions** challenges you to assemble ridiculously complicated Rube Goldberg-style machines from components such as levers, ropes, pipes, balls, magnets, and even house pets. It's educational, it's fun, it's challenging, and this latest release offers 250 new puzzles that will delight wide-eyed kids and jaded engineers alike.

Another engaging puzzler from Sierra is **You Don't Know Jack 5th Dementia.** This virtual TV game show is packed with 600 wacky trivia questions organized into 40 themed "episodes." Like earlier Jacks, 5th Dementia can accommodate up to three contestants in the same room, but this latest installment adds an Internet mode that automatically connects online players. Who would dream of hosting a party without it? ▼

Web Services

THE DOT-COM INDUSTRY HAS CERTAINLY HAD SOME TOUGH SLEDDING OVER THE PAST YEAR, BUT PLENTY OF SURVIVORS REMAIN THAT OFFER VALUABLE SERVICES. ALTHOUGH THIS YEAR'S Top 100 includes fewer Web entries than past listings, we consider this collection of sites to be some of the most innovative ever.

Napster is dead. Long live **KaZaA!** This new peer-to-peer application is rapidly emerging as the popular successor to the throne formerly occupied by Shawn Fanning's revolutionary music-sharing app. Unlike Napster, however, KaZaA lets its community members share *all* forms of media. The software even includes its own file organizer and lets you create your own customized playlists. And though it limits MP3 files to a 128kbps bit rate, the nearly 6 million users who have downloaded the free public beta don't seem to mind.

Controlling your weight may not be easy, but even die-hard Web potatoes can benefit from a few hours with **eDiets.com.** This comprehensive weight-management service supplies subscribers with personalized diet and fitness programs, complete with grocery-shopping lists, daily logs, and weekly evaluations. It also offers 24-hour services that include

TOP 100

THE WEB SERVICES PICKS

- eDiets.com
- KaZaA
- Netflix
- PhotoDVD
- SideStep
- Snapfish

nutritional references, support groups, newsletters, and even online staff psychologists. You supply the willpower, and eDiets.com will do the rest.

Movie fans will be intrigued by the innovative **Netflix** online DVD-rental service. Instead of defining a fixed rental period or charging by the disc, Netflix offers subscription plans that specify how many discs you can have out at the same time, regardless of how long you keep them. Translation: no late fees and a guarantee that you'll always have fresh movies.

If you prefer experiencing exotic locales firsthand to watching them in the movies, **SideStep** can help. This free browser plug-in performs metasearches through dozens of portals like Expedia and Travelocity.com, displays their best fares side by side, and then automatically books your reservations

SideStep

through the site you select. It's the fastest, easiest, and most effective online travel service we've seen.

One of the most economical ways to develop and display those photographic records of your excursions is to send your film to **Snapfish.** This online photofinisher will develop 24- or 36-exposure rolls, print them on Kodak paper, and post them to an online album, all for a mere $1.99 per roll. Even taking into account the additional shipping charge of $1.99 per roll, it's still the best photofinishing bargain.

A more ambitious online-processing service is PhotoWorks.com's **PhotoDVD,** which records your wedding, vacation, or baby pictures onto a multimedia video "album" on DVD. Images are displayed as a slickly produced slide show, complete with dreamy dissolves, romantic zooms, a stereo soundtrack, and even credits and titles. It's a great idea, and PhotoWorks' friendly customization tools make it easy to create a truly unique, personalized recording of those unforgettable events in your life. ▼

Software

(continued from page 115)

Everyone knows that regular defragging of your PC's hard drive is necessary for optimal performance, but some defrag utilities are better than others. The best is Executive Software's $49.95 **Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition.** Rated to be 300 to 500 percent faster than the Disk Defragmenter bundled in Windows, Diskeeper offers advanced features such as a smart scheduler that dynamically schedules defrags based on the condition of your hard drive, a defrag-on-boot mode, and enhanced algorithms for defragging disks with little available space. Don't boot up without it.

You may find it hard to get excited about OCR software, but ABBYY U.S.A. Software House's powerful **FineReader 5.0 Pro** certainly did the trick for us. This program, selling for around $90, offers a terrific combination of ease of use, accuracy, automation, formatting recognition, and output flexibility that we found tough to beat. Once we discovered that it costs about one-fifth the price of OmniPage Pro 11, it didn't take long to add it to our Top 100.

A lot of personal firewalls have hit the market over the past two years, but few can match the flexibility and tenacity of Network ICE's **BlackICE Defender.** In addition to simple setup procedures and an excellent selection of filtering and reporting options, the $35 version 2.136 will even attempt to chase down and identify intruders on the fly. We wouldn't dream of logging on without it. ▼

The BOTTOM FIVE of 2001

by John C. Dvorak

Once again, I've been given the assignment of identifying the five worst products or ideas of the last 12 months or so. Keeping the list to five is always a challenge. As usual, certain technologies and ideas on the edge of failure, such as Rambus memory or the Sony Memory Stick, are a temptation to list, allowing me to be the first to say, "I told you so!" But I refuse to give in. The fact is, some seriously bad ideas and products emerged this year. Here then is this year's final list, in no particular order:

1 The Epson Smart Cartridge. If anything is going to kill the momentum of Epson and its incredible piezoelectric inkjet technology, it's this ridiculous addition. Epson, in its newer printers, has put intelligence in the cartridges and printer mechanism to foil third-party ink suppliers. While this chip in the cartridge is supposed to monitor ink usage, it's really designed to let the printer know that an "alien" cartridge has been installed. Many of these third-party cartridges are used by professional photographers for special purposes such as true black-and-white printing. Perhaps it's time for printer companies to drop the idea of selling printers below cost in some sort of razor-and-razor-blade scheme.

2 Smart Tags. This idea from Microsoft, which let outside sources put links on other people's Web sites, was a real gem. Apparently the good folks in Redmond didn't notice the hullabaloo over frames years earlier. Framing became an issue as companies and individuals "framed" other sites and surrounded them with advertising. Whatever was wrong with framing is far worse with this technology. If there's a top dog among this year's bottom five, this would be it. Microsoft quickly dropped this concept when people began to complain, but don't be surprised if the company tries it again in another form.

3 3Com Audrey. Gosh, this was a no-brainer. The Audrey was an incredibly expensive Internet client that was also homely. Designed as an effortless way for boneheads to get on the Internet, it turned out to be something nobody wanted. The company dropped it within months of its introduction. Not surprisingly, no company has made inroads into this nonmarket.

4 Webvan. While this idea didn't originate in 2001, it collapsed (finally) this year. This was the company that let you order groceries over the Internet. It belongs in this list because after the firm burned through a ridiculous $800 million or more, the executives said that all they needed to survive was more money! What gall.

5 Combo cameras. This may be the weakest of this year's bottom-five selections, but it's also one of the weakest product ideas—those stupid all-in-one cameras that combine a Webcam, a snapshot digicam, and an MP3 player. It's a perfect example of a product that has no reason to exist but is produced only because it is possible. You always see odd combo items like this at the Computex trade show, where someone's selling a modem card with a built-in USB hub and DVD decoder, or some such thing. What you're really getting with combo cameras is a huge MP3 player, a very mediocre digital camera, and a clunky Webcam. The worst of all three worlds. ▼

For additional product information, see p. 122.

TOP100 PRODUCT LISTING

DESKTOPS

ABS AMD Web Special
ABS Computer Technologies
800-926-8088
www.abspc.com
Direct Price: $1,097
• 34786

Alienware Area 51
Alienware
800-494-3382
www.alienware.com
Direct Price: $3,020
• 34787

Apple Power Mac G4
Apple Computer
800-692-7753
www.apple.com
Direct Price: $4,006
• 34788

ABS AMD Web Special

Compaq Presario 7000
Compaq Computer
800-888-0220
www.compaq.com
Direct Price: $1,986
• 34789

Dell OptiPlex GX150
Dell Computer
877-973-3355
www.dell.com
Direct Price: $1,425
• 34790

Falcon Northwest Mach V
Falcon Northwest
888-325-2661
www.falcon-nw.com
Direct Price: $4,003
• 34791

Gateway Performance 1800XL Deluxe
Gateway
800-846-4208
www.gateway.com
Direct Price: $2,728
• 34792

NuTrend Duron Power 2
NuTrend Computer Products
888-482-6678
www.nutrend.com
Direct Price: $995
• 34793

Polywell Poly 880KR
Polywell Computers
800-999-1278
www.polywell.com
Direct Price: $2,483
• 34794

Xi MTower SP
Xi Computer
800-432-0486
www.xicomputer.com
Direct Price: $2,374
• 34795

NOTEBOOKS

Acer TravelMate 610TXVi
Acer America
800-551-2237
www.acer.com
Average Price: $1,849
• 34796

Apple iBook
Apple Computer
800-692-7753
www.apple.com
Direct Price: $1,299 to $1,799
• 34797

Apple PowerBook G4
Apple Computer
800-692-7753
www.apple.com
Direct Price: $2,599 to $3,997
• 34798

Dell Inspiron 8100
Dell Computer
800-999-3355
www.dell.com
Direct Price: $2,945
• 34799

Gateway Solo 3450
Gateway
800-846-4208
www.gateway.com
Direct Price: $2,199
• 34822

HP OmniBook 500

Gateway Solo 9550
Gateway
800-846-4208
www.gateway.com
Direct Price: $2,753
• 34801

HP OmniBook 500
Hewlett-Packard
888-999-4747
www.hp.com
Direct Price: $2,549
• 34802

IBM ThinkPad A Series
IBM
888-746-7426
www.ibm.com/thinkpad
Direct Price: $1,299 to $2,919 (base price)
• 34803

Toshiba Satellite 2805-S402
Toshiba America Information Systems
800-316-0920
www.toshiba.com
Direct Price: $2,199
• 34804

WinBook X1
WinBook Computer
800-254-7806
www.winbook.com
Direct Price: $2,999
• 34805

MOBILE PRODUCTS

AVC Soul Player DMP-01
AVC Technology
011-852-2334-7334
www.soulplayer.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $150
• 34753

Intel Pocket Concert Audio Player

Compaq iPaq H3650 Pocket PC
Compaq Computer
800-282-6672
www.compaq.com/ipaq
Direct Price: $499
• 34224

HandEra 330
HandEra
515-252-7522
www.handera.com
Direct Price: $349.99
• 34738

Handspring Visor Platinum
Handspring
888-565-9393
www.handspring.com
Direct Price: $199
• 34225

Intel Pocket Concert Audio Player
Intel
800-538-3373
www.intel.com/home/audio
Direct Price: $299
• 34240

Kyocera QCP 6035 Smartphone
Kyocera Wireless
800-349-4188
www.kyocera.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $399.99
• 34241

Motorola V.Series 60c
Motorola
800-331-6456
www.motorola.com
Average Price: $500
• 34486

M-Systems DiskOnKey
M-Systems
866-347-5665
www.diskonkey.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $49.99 (8MB); $69.99 (16MB); $99.99 (32MB)
• 34781

Palm m105
Palm
800-881-7256
www.palm.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $199
• 34487

Sonicblue RioVolt
Sonicblue
800-468-5846
www.riohome.com
Direct Price: $169.95
• 34432

Sony CLIÉ PEG-N710C
Sony Electronics
877-760-7669
www.sony.com/clie
Direct Price: $499.99
• 34543

HARDWARE

Altec Lansing ADA890
Altec Lansing Technologies
800-258-3288
www.altecmm.com
Average Price: $287
• 34423

ATI All-in-Wonder Radeon
ATI Technologies
905-882-2600
www.ati.com
Average Price: $213
• 34228

Cornerstone c910
Cornerstone Peripherals Technology
800-562-2383
www.monitorsdirect.com
Direct Price: $269
• 34425

Epson PhotoPC 3100Z
Epson America
800-463-7766
www.epson.com
Average Price: $713
• 34756

Epson Stylus Photo 1280
Epson America
800-463-7766
www.epson.com
Average Price: $467
• 34422

Gigabyte GV-GF3000
Gigabyte Technology
626-854-9338
www.giga-byte.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $369
• 34758

Hercules Game Theater XP
Hercules
877-484-5536
www.hercules.com
Average Price: $137
• 34206

HP CD-Writer DVD Combo 9900ci
Hewlett-Packard
888-999-4747
www.hpshopping.com
Average Price: $180
• 34505

HP ScanJet 7450c
Hewlett-Packard
800-722-6538
scanjet.hp.com
Average Price: $628
• 34759

Klipsch ProMedia 4.1
Klipsch Audio Technologies
888-554-5665
www.klipsch.com
Average Price: $280
• 34760

Lexmark Z53 Color Jetprinter
Lexmark International
888-539-6275
www.lexmark.com
Average Price: $133
• 34701

Logitech Cordless MouseMan Optical
Logitech
800-231-7717
www.logitech.com
Average Price: $63
• 34518

Microtek ScanMaker V6UPL
Microtek
800-654-4160
www.microtek.com
Average Price: $122
• 34509

Mobility Electronics EasiDock USB 300F
Mobility Electronics
800-588-4593
www.mobilityelectronics.com
Average Price: $171
• 34762

Nikon Coolscan IV ED
Nikon
800-645-6689
www.nikonusa.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $899
• 34785

Altec Lansing ADA890

Olympus Camedia C-3040 Zoom
Olympus America
800-622-6372
www.olympus.com
Average Price: $740
• 34763

Olympus Camedia E-10
Olympus America
800-622-6372
www.olympus.com
Average Price: $1,711
• 34764

Plextor PlexWriter 16/10/40A
Plextor
800-886-3935
www.plextor.com
Average Price: $196
• **34765**

Samsung ML-1210
Samsung Electronics America
800-726-7864
www.samsungusa.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $199
• 34784

Samsung SyncMaster 570vTFT
Samsung Electronics America
800-726-7864
www.samsungmonitor.com
Average Price: $436
• 34504

SanDisk ImageMate
SanDisk
800-977-5427
www.sandisk.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $29.99
• 34498

Seagate Barracuda ATA IV
Seagate Technology
800-732-4283
www.seagate.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $265
• 34766

SOHOware NetBlaster II
SOHOware
800-632-1118
www.sohoware.com
Average Price: $470 (for NetBlaster II Access Point, PC Card, and PCI card)
• 34711

Sony DCR-PC110 Digital Handycam
Sony Electronics
800-222-7669
www.sony.com/di
Average Price: $1,544
• 34767

Sony Spressa CRX200E/A1
Sony Electronics
800-352-7669
www.sony.com/spressa
Average Price: $196
• 34708

ViewSonic VG175
ViewSonic
800-888-8583
www.viewsonic.com
Average Price: $971
• 34768

Voyetra Turtle Beach Santa Cruz
Voyetra Turtle Beach
800-233-9377
www.turtle-beach.com
Average Price: $73
• 33967

Western Digital Caviar WD1000BB
Western Digital
888-935-8893
www.westerndigital.com
Direct Price: $299
• 34809

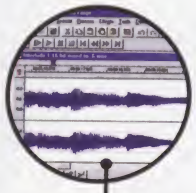
SOFTWARE

ACDSee 3.1
ACD Systems
800-579-5309
www.acdsystems.com
Direct Price: $49.95
• 34058

Adobe Acrobat 5.0
Adobe Systems
888-724-4508
www.adobe.com/acrobat
Average Price: $220
• 34522

Adobe Photoshop Elements
Adobe Systems
800-492-3623
www.adobe.com/elements
Average Price: $87
• 34415

Adobe Premiere 6
Adobe Systems
888-724-4507
www.adobe.com/premiere
Average Price: $550
• 34302


Sound Forge 5.0

BlackICE Defender 2.136
Network ICE
888-901-7477
www.networkice.com
Average Price: $35
• 34403

Cakewalk Sonar XL
Twelve Tone Systems
888-225-3925
www.cakewalk.com
Direct Price: $739
• 34770

Character Studio 3
Discreet, a subsidiary of Autodesk
800-869-3504
www.discreet.com
List Price: $1,495
• 34771

CorelDraw 10 Graphics Suite
Corel
800-772-6735
www.corel.com
Average Price: $461
• 34132

Diskeeper 6.0 Second Edition
Executive Software International
800-829-6468
www.execsoft.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $49.95
• 34752

Final Cut Pro 2
Apple Computer
800-692-7753
www.apple.com/finalcutpro
Direct Price: $999
• 34733

FineReader 5.0 Pro
ABBYY U.S.A. Software House
877-328-2229
www.abbyy.com
Average Price: $90
• 34772

Macromedia Dreamweaver 4 Fireworks 4 Studio
Macromedia
800-457-1774
www.macromedia.com
Average Price: $366
• 34773

Microsoft Encarta Reference Library 2002
Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com
Average Price: $66
• 34774

Microsoft Picture It Photo Premium Edition 2002
Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com
Average Price: $47
• 34775

Microsoft Publisher 2002
Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com
Average Price: $116
• 34776

Opera for Windows 5.12
Opera Software
011-47-24-16-40-00
www.opera.com
Direct Price: Free (version with ad window); $39 (version without ads)
• 34706

PC Upgrade Commander
V Communications
800-648-8266
www.v-com.com
Average Price: $45
• 34601

Quicken TurboTax Deluxe
Intuit
800-335-1348
www.intuit.com
Direct Price: $39.95
• 34203

Sound Forge 5.0
Sonic Foundry
800-577-6642
www.sonicfoundry.com
Average Price: $265
• 34777

Street Atlas USA 9.0
DeLorme
800-561-5104
www.delorme.com
Direct Price: $44.95
• 34782

TrueSpace5
Caligari
800-351-7620
www.caligari.com
Direct Price: $299
• 34264

NASCAR Racing 4

Windows XP Home Edition
Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $199 (full version); $99 (upgrade)
• 34783

GAMES

Age of Empires II: The Conquerors Expansion
Microsoft
800-426-9400
www.microsoft.com/games
Average Price: $28
• 34061

Baldur's Gate II: Throne of Bhaal
Interplay Entertainment
800-969-4263
www.interplay.com
Average Price: $30
• 34718

Black & White
Electronic Arts
650-628-1900
blackandwhite.ea.com
Average Price: $40
• 34481

Clive Barker's Undying
Electronic Arts
650-628-1900
undying.ea.com
Average Price: $42
• 34419

Command & Conquer Red Alert 2
Westwood Studios
877-324-2637
www.westwood.com
Average Price: $45
• 34151

Emperor: Battle for Dune
Westwood Studios
877-324-2637
www.westwood.com
Average Price: $42
• 34635

The Incredible Machine: Even More Contraptions
Sierra
800-757-7707
www.sierra.com
Mfr. Est. Price: $29.95
• 34779

The Longest Journey
Funcom
011-47-22-42-01-02
www.funcom.com
Average Price: $34
• 34265

Majestic
Electronic Arts
650-628-1900
www.majestic thegame.com
Direct Price: Initial episode free; subsequent episodes included in EA's $9.95 per month Platinum service (also includes several other games)
• 34778

Myst III: Exile
Ubi Soft Entertainment
415-547-4000
www.ubisoft.com
Average Price: $43
• 34534

NASCAR Racing 4
Sierra
800-757-7707
www.sierra.com
Average Price: $46
• 34417

Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force
Activision
310-255-2000
www.activision.com
Average Price: $31
• 34021

You Don't Know Jack 5th Dementia
Sierra
800-757-7707
www.sierra.com
Average Price: $18
• 34429

WEB SERVICES

eDiets.com
eDiets.com
800-265-6170
www.ediets.com
Price: $35 for first three months; $10 per month for subsequent months
• 34527

KaZaA
KaZaA
011-31-20-422-6521
www.kazaa.com
Price: Free download
• 34780

SideStep

Netflix
Netflix.com
888-638-3549
www.netflix.com
Price: $19.95 per month for three discs; $24.95 for four discs
• 34359

PhotoDVD
PhotoWorks
800-746-8696
www.photoworks.com
Price: $24.95 for a 50-photo album (plus 10 cents each additional photo; up to 200 per disc)
• 34624

SideStep
SideStep
408-235-1700
www.sidestep.com
Price: Free download
• 34470

Snapfish
Snapfish.com
304-420-5615
www.snapfish.com
Price: $1.99 per roll (plus $1.99 shipping and handling per roll)
• 34152

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For real-time pricing, go to *priceit.zdnet.com* and enter number.

From start to finish, here's the hardware and software you need to create videos and burn discs that will play in your home DVD player.

BY JAN OZER

Do-It-Yourself DVDs

SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL VIDEO EDITING

If you own a digital video (DV) camcorder, chances are you've been eyeing the DVD player in your home-entertainment center and wondering why you can't play your homemade digital videos on that device. Now you can.

Several new products make it possible—and affordable—to transfer DV movies from the camcorder to the PC, then burn edited versions onto a disc for use in your DVD player. (For information on creating Video CDs using a CD-RW drive, see this month's Tune-Up, "The Video CD Revolution.") The route from DV to DVD has four major stops, involving several hardware and software components.

First is the DV card, which transfers the video from camcorder to computer. The device itself is fairly simple. The most confusing aspect is the number of different names given to the transfer interface: IEEE 1394 (the official designation for the transfer standard), the Apple-coined FireWire, and Sony's iLink. Rest assured, they're all the same, and any of them will work with your DV camera.

Once the video has been transferred to your hard drive, you cut, paste, and produce your videos in a video editor and convert them to the required MPEG-2 format. Next stop is a DVD-authoring program that lets you build in the interactivity inherent in the *DVD specification*. Finally, you burn the production onto a DVD-R or DVD-RW disc that's compatible with your DVD player.

Here's what to look for in each of the four product categories.

BE A MOVIE MOGUL

Whether you're an amateur auteur or a special-effects wizard, here's the hardware and software you need to turn your computer into a DVD studio.

	Beginner		Corporate/professional	
DV card	Pinnacle Studio DV 7	$129	Canopus DVRaptor-RT	$599
Video editor	Pinnacle Studio 7 (included with card)	$0	Adobe Premiere 6 (included with card)	$0
DVD authoring	SpruceUp	$129	DVDit PE	$999
DVD-R drive	Pioneer DVR-AO3	$799	Pioneer DVR-A03	$799
Total investment		$1,057		$2,397

FROM CAM TO COMPUTER

SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL VIDEO EDITING

D-Link DFW-500

1

In one critical respect—video quality—all DV cards are created equal. That's because the primary role of DV cards is simply to manage the transfer of video from camera to computer, which is more like a file transfer than traditional analog video capture. So whether you use the IEEE 1394 port included with your computer or spend $30 to $3,000 on a DV card, the quality of the video delivered to your computer will be identical.

Further leveling the playing field is burgeoning video-editor support for the Open Host Controller Interface (OHCI) standard. Until recently, many consumer-oriented DV cards stored the DV files in a different format than professional cards, making the files incompatible with high-end video editors like Adobe Premiere.

Today, however, Premiere 6 supports all OHCI DV cards, as do virtually all other video editors. OHCI compatibility also provides compatibility with other IEEE 1394 peripherals, such as Webcams.

Beyond quality and compatibility, of course, DV cards vary greatly in many material respects. Inexpensive cards such as D-Link Systems' DFW-500 ($39, ***www.dlink.com***) offer three IEEE 1394 ports for DV input. If you also have analog camera equipment, you might opt for Dazzle Multimedia's Dv.now AV ($499.99, ***www.dazzle.com***), which supports composite and S-Video inputs as well.

None of the products costing less than $400 enables real-time effects—that is, if you set up a transition or similar effect in your video editor, you'll have to render the video before previewing, which can take anywhere from seconds to minutes, depending on the effect and the speed of your computer's processor. In contrast, products such as the Canopus DVRaptor-RT ($599, ***www.canopuscorp.com***), Matrox RT2500 ($999, ***www.shopmatrox. com***), and Pinnacle DV500 Plus ($599, ***www.pinnaclesys.com***) can display a wide variety of transition, filter, motion, and keying effects in real time, which can speed up production considerably.

DV CARDS: HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT ONE

	Consumer		Professional		
Product	Dazzle Dv.now AV	D-Link DFW-500	Canopus DVRaptor-RT	Matrox RT2500	Pinnacle DV500 Plus
What it does	Transfers video from camera to computer	Transfers video from camera to computer	Transfers video from camera to computer with real-time effects	Transfers video from camera to computer with real-time effects	Transfers video from camera to computer with real-time effects
Target user	Consumers using both DV and analog footage	Entry-level consumers	Demanding consumers, corporate users, and pro videographers	Demanding consumers, corporate users, and pro videographers	Demanding consumers, corporate users, and pro videographers
Who makes it	Dazzle Multimedia	D-Link Systems	Canopus	Matrox Graphics	Pinnacle Systems
What you'll pay	$499.99	$39	$599	$999	$599
Find out more	888-212-8045, ***www.dazzle.com***	800-326-1688, ***www.dlink.com***	888-868-2533, ***www.canopuscorp.com***	800-361-4903, ***www.shopmatrox.com***	888-484-3366, ***www.pinnaclesys.com***

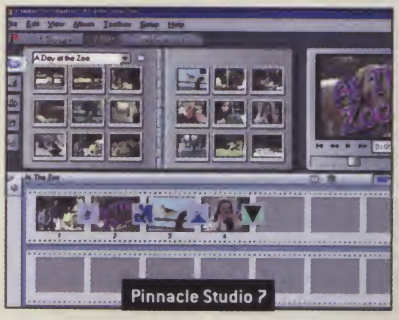
THE RIGHT EDITOR

2

One of the most significant differences among the various DV cards is the bundled video editor, which determines the creative flexibility you'll have, as well as the steepness of the learning curve. Because all major video editors are available as stand-alone products, you can buy the hardware and software separately, but you'll save time and money by buying a hardware/software bundle.

Video editors fall into three major categories: free, consumer, and professional. Free editors include Microsoft's Windows Movie Maker (which comes with Windows Millennium Edition and Windows XP) and Apple Computer's iMovie 2. Because Movie Maker doesn't output into MPEG-2 format, it's useless for DVD authoring.

In contrast, iMovie 2 delivers a greater array of features, making it easily comparable to the consumer editors discussed below. More important, it also dovetails seamlessly with Apple's iDVD DVD-authoring program, creating the simplest DV-to-DVD solution available. It's available only for Macintosh computers, of course.


Pinnacle Studio 7

At the high end, professional editors such as the venerable Adobe Premiere 6.0 ($549, ***www.adobe.com***), perennial challenger Ulead MediaStudio Pro 6.0 ($295, ***www.ulead.com***), and newcomer Vegas Video 2.0 from Sonic Foundry ($559.96 in boxed version or $489.97 download, ***www.sonicfoundry.com***) pack the features necessary to produce a complete TV show or movie, using extensive effects with precision controls. These products also have a learning curve that's way too steep for most amateurs.

VIDEO EDITORS: FROM EASY TO EXPERT

	Consumer					Professional
Product	iMovie 2	MGI VideoWave 4	Pinnacle Studio 7	Ulead VideoStudio 5.0	VideoFactory	Adobe Premiere 6
Target user	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Corporate, pro
Who makes it	Apple Computer	MGI Software	Pinnacle Systems	Ulead Systems	Sonic Foundry	Adobe Systems
What you'll pay	Free with certain desktops, notebooks; $49 to upgrade	$99.95	$129	$129.95	$59.97	$549
Find out more	800-692-7753, ***www.apple.com***	888-644-7638, ***www.mgisoft.com***	888-484-3366, ***www.pinnaclesys.com***	800-858-5323, ***www.ulead.com***	800-577-6642, ***www.sonicfoundry.com***	800-833-6687, ***www.adobe.com***

ADVICE FOR AUTHORS

SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL VIDEO EDITING

3

At their core, most DVD titles have three components: the menu screens you move through to play your video files, the buttons and text you click on to navigate through the menus or play the movies, and the actual movies. For most productions, the authoring process involves creating or importing menu screens, creating or importing buttons and text, importing audio/video assets (or files), and then linking them.

The consumer-oriented DVD-authoring market comprises three primary products: Apple's iDVD, Sonic Solutions' DVDit ($499, ***www.sonic.com***), and Spruce Technologies' SpruceUp ($129, ***www.spruce-tech.com***).

Apple's free iDVD is easy to use but restrictive. Though you can choose from different customizable themes, the result can be a decidedly cookie-cutter look. Interscreen navigation is also limited, and iDVD doesn't support chapter points (points in the video to which you can link with buttons or text).

SpruceUp offers the most menu creativity, with extensive import capabilities and a WYSIWYG menu designer that includes the grid and alignment controls DVDit lacks. SpruceUp is also the only program that can link DVD assets to URLs, automatically opening your viewer's browser to an address when played on a PC.

The third offering, DVDit, is easier to use, and provides many canned screen and button objects with the base program. If you acquire DVDit in a product bundle, your biggest challenge will be identifying its feature set, since Sonic Solutions has a variety of custom bundling arrangements.

DVDit

All DVDit versions should have the ability to specify the order of menu items on a page, create timed menus, and set navigational movie properties, so you can send viewers to another menu screen when a movie finishes playing. This level of creative flexibility is unavailable in iDVD and SpruceUp.

None of the bundled versions of DVDit supports chapter points. This is important when you're creating one longer file you'd like to play back linearly but also want the ability to access certain highlights directly.

With SpruceUp, for example, you can create a 20-minute video of your summer vacation, then set chapter points that link to the start of the major segments. With iDVD and all bundled DVDit versions, you'd have to create the long movie for linear playback and also each individual segment for direct access.

Asset linking is automatic in iDVD—you drop your movie on the screen to create the button. Both DVDit and SpruceUp link assets to menu buttons via drag and drop, and all three programs deliver extensive preview capabilities so you can check your work. Then you're ready to burn, baby, burn.

Overall, iDVD is your only choice on the Mac, unless you'd like to upgrade to Apple's $999 DVD Studio Pro. For the PC, SpruceUp clearly delivers the most functionality at the best price. Though it can get pricey if you have to upgrade to the standard editor, DVDit has a fundamental completeness and a certain polish that make it the clear leader.

DVD AUTHORING: VIDEO CREATION FOR CONSUMERS

Product	DVDit	iDVD	SpruceUp
Target user	Consumer, entry-level corporate	Consumer, entry-level Mac users	Consumer, entry-level corporate
Who makes it	Sonic Solutions	Apple Computer	Spruce Technologies
What you'll pay	$499 (Standard); $999 (Professional)	Free with Mac systems with SuperDrives	$129
Find out more	877-957-7144, ***www.sonic.com***	800-692-7753, ***www.apple.com***	408-861-2200, ***www.spruce-tech.com***

In the middle are consumer editors such as MGI VideoWave 4 ($99.95, ***www.mgisoft.com***), Pinnacle Studio 7 ($129), Sonic Foundry's VideoFactory ($59.97), and Ulead VideoStudio 5.0 ($129.95). These packages provide far fewer features in a much simpler interface. In effect, less is definitely more for most users.

Overall, these programs have many more similarities than differences. All control the transfer of DV video to the computer, simplifying capture. However, to save disk space, Pinnacle's unique SmartCapture technology generates a low-resolution file for use during editing, then retrieves the full DV file before the final render, a very handy feature. Pinnacle also includes a DV card with the software.

After transferring the video to the PC, the next logical step is trimming unwanted frames from the captured video, a feature all the consumer editors offer. Most programs provide an interface with timelines for laying out videos, generally with separate video tracks for titles and other overlays, and audio tracks for adding voice narration and background music. MGI VideoWave instead offers only a storyboard interface; its lack of a timeline complicates the application of projectwide effects such as logos and background audio.

Ulead MediaStudio Pro 6.0	Vegas Video 2.0
Corporate, pro	Corporate, pro
Ulead Systems	Sonic Foundry
$295	$559.96 (boxed); $489.97 (download)
800-858-5323, ***www.ulead.com***	800-577-6642, ***www.sonicfoundry.com***

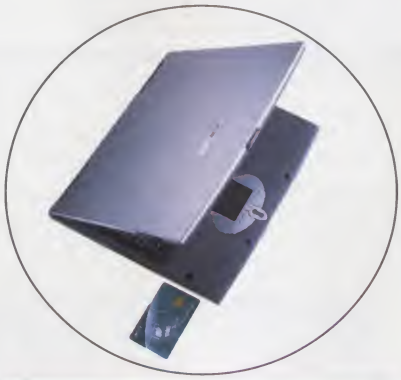
Transition selection is reasonably comparable, and all programs except VideoFactory simplify the creation of titles with rolls and crawls, though Pinnacle's TitleDeko is clearly the best of the bunch. If you're editing for output back to DV, be aware that both VideoFactory and MGI VideoWave are limited to about 18 minutes of production time, while Pinnacle Studio and Ulead VideoStudio are essentially unlimited.

Most important, all these packages support output to MPEG-2 format, which is required for DVD production; MGI VideoWave's heavy reliance on presets simplifies this process. Interestingly, all programs can also output into MPEG-1 format (ideal for video on CD-ROM), RealNetworks' and Microsoft's streaming formats, and Microsoft's legacy format, Audio/Video Interleave (AVI). QuickTime support is less common. Once your videos are safely encoded in MPEG-2 format, you're ready to begin authoring.

TravelMate 614TXCi

$2299

Intel® Pentium® III processor 1 GHz
14.1" TFT
128MB SDRAM
30GB
DVD/CDRW Combo Drive
56K+ 10/100 Ethernet + 802.11b (WLAN)
Windows® 2000 Professional
Smart Card security built in



TravelMate 612TXCi

$1999

Intel® Pentium® III processor 900MHz
14.1" TFT
128MB SDRAM
20GB
DVD/CDRW Combo Drive
56K+ 10/100 Ethernet + 802.11b (WLAN)
Windows® 2000 Professional
Smart Card security built in

TravelMate 353TEV

$1699

Intel® Pentium® III processor 800MHz
13.3" TFT
Weight: 4.0 lbs
128MB SDRAM
20GB
DVD/FDD Combo Drive
56K+ 10/100 Ethernet
Windows® Millennium or Windows® 98
Smart Card security built in

TravelMate 612TXV

$1599

Intel® Pentium® III processor 900MHz
14.1" TFT
128MB SDRAM
20GB
8x DVD
56K+ 10/100 Ethernet
Windows® Millennium or Windows® 98
Smart Card security built in

TravelMate 529TXV

$1399

Intel® Pentium® III processor 850MHz
14.1" TFT
128MB SDRAM
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BURN THIS

4

Remember the camcorder advertisement from the mid-'90s that asked, "Will this tape play in my VCR?" The analogous question with DVD burners is, "Will this disc play in my DVD player?"

A year ago, the answer was disturbing: "Yes, but the burner will cost you $5,000." Happily, by late 2001, several options should be available for less than $1,000.

Had the DVD industry set out to confuse consumers and stall market growth, it couldn't have done better than via its mélange of wildly confusing DVD-related formats, which includes DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD-RAM, DVD-RAM/R, and DVD+RW. (Technical details regarding each format are spelled out in "DVD Recording Demystified," p. 110 in our August issue.)

Those wondering whether a certain format is compatible with standard DVD players should quickly dismiss DVD-RAM; the discs come housed in proprietary cartridges. DVD-RAM/R and DVD+RW, which both first shipped in mid-2001, haven't been around long enough to prove themselves in real-world situations. DVD+RW, however, has the backing of several hardware vendors.

This leaves DVD-R and DVD-RW as your safest bets for producing media compatible with your DVD player. Several drives sell for less than $1,000, including Pioneer's $799 DVR-AO3 DVD-R/RW model, which is bundled with selected Apple, Compaq, and Sony systems.

Pioneer DVR-AO3

Like most DVD-R/RW drives, the DVR-AO3 is the Swiss Army knife of optical units. It's able to write to CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R, and DVD-RW media, and it can read all four media types. You won't need a separate CD writer to burn audio CDs.

If you prefer an external drive, you can opt for QPS's $759 FireWire DVD-R/RW drive. QPS also sells an internal SCSI-interface drive, and DVD-R/RW internal and external solutions should now be available from LaCie, Ricoh, Sharp, and a variety of other companies. Software bundles are still coalescing, but be certain that they will include both a DVD-authoring program, like those described earlier, and a DVD-mastering program for data archiving.

Technically, all the low-cost DVD-R/RW drives are DVD-R(G) drives. The "G" indicates general recording, meaning you can't create a DVD disc for master duplication. For that, you'll need a DVD-R(A) drive for authoring. DVD-R(A) models include Pioneer's $4,031 DVR-S201 and an announced but as-yet-unnamed drive from Panasonic.

DVD-R(G) and DVD-R(A) burners require different types of media, so be sure to buy the appropriate type. Apple's DVD-R(G) five-packs cost around $50, though prices will probably drop fast as the installed base of drives grows.

DVD-R DRIVES: THREE DISC BURNERS

Product	Pioneer DVR-AO3	Pioneer DVR-S201	QPS FireWire DVD-R/RW Writer
Technology type	SCSI DVD-R/RW (G)	SCSI DVD-R/RW (A)	FireWire DVD-R/RW (G)
What it does	DVD-R creation	DVD-R mastering	DVD-R creation
Target user	Consumer, corporate	Corporate, pro	Consumer, corporate
Who makes it	Pioneer Electronics	Pioneer Electronics	QPS
What you'll pay	$799	$4,031	$759
Find out more	800-444-6784, www.pioneerelectronics.com	800-444-6784, www.pioneerelectronics.com	800-559-4777, www.qps-inc.com

Prefab PCs

Given the complexities of adding several pieces of hardware and software for DVD creation, no one would blame you if you simply decided to buy a new computer with all the bundled components.

Apple offers several Power Mac G4-based systems, starting at $2,499 direct, with the Pioneer DVR-A03 drive, an embedded IEEE 1394 interface, and both iMovie 2 and iDVD (the latter soon to be iDVD 2).

On the Windows front, Compaq *(www.compaq.com)* provides the DVR-A03 drive as a less-than-$500 option for its Presario line of computers, along with the Pinnacle Studio video-editing software and DVDit LE. At press time, the Compaq systems with this drive started at $1,819.

Sony VAIO Digital Studio PCV-RX490TV

Sony's $2,599 VAIO Digital Studio PCV-RX490TV *(www.sony.com)* includes the DVR-A03 drive, several Sony capture and video-editing packages, and feature-limited editions of DVDit and Adobe Premiere. We expect to see similar bundles from other vendors, though none has yet been announced.

Note that none of the DV-card options in the bundled systems operates in real time. That shortcoming aside, you get the benefit of components guaranteed to work well together, and you avoid the installation hassle. That means you can kick back on the sofa and screen your own DVDs in no time.

GET READY TO DIRECT

If you're installing these four components into your current computer or building your own from scratch, you'll find the system requirements surprisingly attainable. Unless you opt for a real-time DV card, a 300MHz Pentium II system with 128MB of RAM should meet the minimum requirements. But a faster system will pay dividends when it's time to crunch your videos into MPEG-2 format.

On the hard drive front, most of today's EIDE drives can easily handle DV's 3.6MB-per-second transfer rate, or even the 7.2MB per second you'll need for a real-time card. At this transfer rate, DV eats up about 216MB of hard drive space per minute.

When you consider that you might have to capture 60 minutes, or more than 12GB of data, to edit down to a 15-minute production, you can see where drive capacity can get critical. Fortunately, with 80GB drives such as Maxtor's DiamondMax 80 now creeping down to less than $200, capacity is a newly affordable luxury.

Should you opt for a real-time card, check the minimum system requirements carefully, because such a product will be your most demanding component. Follow these guidelines, however, and it should be relatively easy to set up a system that transports your cinematic vision from videocam to the home entertainment center. And if you've got talent, good, it may even be pretty easy to convince friends and family to endure your directorial debut. ▼

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PORTABLE STORAGE

BEFORE YOU BUY A PDA, A DIGITAL CAMERA, OR AN AUDIO PLAYER, DON'T FORGET TO CONSIDER THE MEMORY FORMAT.

SIZING UP

PORTABLE STORAGE

by Kevin Shay

Music fanatic

Jay Brewer used to carry his CDs everywhere. Then he found a better solution.

"I've been using SmartMedia cards with my MP3 player for about a year now, and find them to be much smaller and better than carrying around a ton of CDs," he says. Size isn't the only advantage, notes Brewer, a graphic designer who lives in Boston. "The cards are solid-state and can't be scratched, which makes them more durable."

The ability to store data on recordable removable media is an integral part of today's PDAs, digital cameras, MP3 players, and other portable electronic devices. If you're in the market for any of these, it's easy to be confused by the competing storage formats supported by the various makes and models. This look at the state of the market should help.

A FLASH IN THE CAM

When digital cameras began to penetrate the photography market, manufacturers and end users faced a fundamental problem: How to store the images? Conventional magnetic hard drives and floppy drives were not only too heavy and cumbersome to integrate into cameras, but also prone to failure under real-world conditions.

Flash memory was the answer. Long used for storage inside electronic devices, flash technology is solid-state and nonvolatile, meaning it has no moving parts and doesn't need a power source to retain what's stored. Both the removable flash cards themselves and the drive built into a device to read the cards can be very small. For digital-camera users, these advantages were enough to justify flash memory's higher price. The first widely adopted form of removable flash memory, the SmartMedia card, is wafer-thin and about one-third the size of a credit card.

SmartMedia is still widely used, but it's limited by a 128MB maximum capacity. The format has another drawback: The controller resides on the device, rather than on the memory card. And each new generation of higher-capacity SmartMedia required a different controller, except for the 64MB and 128MB cards.

"This has caused a lot of incompatibilities with older devices," says Steve Sanders, who delivers digital-camera news, trends, and reviews on his Web site, Steve's Digicams *(www.steves-digicams.com)*.

Storage maker SanDisk *(www.sandisk.com)* responded to the need for larger and more compatible flash media by developing the CompactFlash standard in 1994. Thicker than SmartMedia cards, CompactFlash cards contain multiple flash-memory chips, resulting in higher storage capacities.

"Regardless of what capacity another card gets to, we'll always be four to eight times their capacity," says Bill Frank, executive director of the CompactFlash Association *(www.compactflash.org)*. CompactFlash was rapidly adopted by a number of camera makers and is considered the leading format in the digital-camera market today.

CompactFlash's larger form factor, however, makes it less than ideal for devices smaller than cameras, such as audio players and cell phones. The need for a more compact format led to the creation of the MultiMediaCard (MMC), a postage-stamp-size card jointly developed by SanDisk and Siemens, says Craig Rotbert, product marketing manager for SanDisk.

Close on the heels of MMC came the Secure Digital (SD) Memory Card. SD is a competing standard with its own trade association *(www.sdcard.org)*, although it is backward-compatible with the MMC interface; any slot that accepts SD will accommodate MMC. As its name implies, SD incorporates encryption features aimed at protecting the rights of copyright holders when storing audio files. The cards have a floppy-disk-style manual lock that prevents accidental erasures.

Although each of these types of flash memory has its pros and cons, all the devices share a common drawback: They're incompatible with one another. Sony further complicated the picture with the 1998 introduction of its own flash-memory technology, Memory Stick, using media the size of a stick of gum.

"It's designed as one media to hold your music, your pictures, your video, and any data, all on one stick," says Dulcie Neiman, Memory Stick and convergence-products marketing manager at Sony *(www.sel.sony.com)*. It takes a lot of capacity to store all that cross-application data, and Sony plans to deliver it. Although the current generation of Memory Sticks maxes out at 128MB, Neiman says Sony has no intention of stopping there.

"We are in development on 256MB storage that will be coming out next year, 512MB the following year, and [eventually] 1GB, which is a lot of data in an ultrasmall, compact form factor," she says.

Sony did not engender goodwill by creating a proprietary flash-memory standard, especially in the digital-camera community. "Sony's Memory Stick was not favorably received because most of us felt that we

The Portable Future

What does the future hold for portable storage?

"We see no end to the trend for more and more mobility, and more and more devices that are basically handheld digital products," says John Osterhout, worldwide marketing director for IBM's Storage Technology division.

Retail kiosks are predicted to be a growth industry. Dulcie Neiman, marketing manager for Sony's Memory Stick and convergence products, notes that such kiosks will let you load sightseeing information, restaurant information, and even your horoscope onto your Memory Stick or other storage card.

Some digital cameras may eventually employ transfer technology, such as Bluetooth, for wireless storage. According to a spokesman at digital-camera maker Fujifilm *(www.fujifilm.com)*, instead of having to store data on a card that fits in the camera itself, you might have another option.

"You might have some type of memory wallet you wear on your hip when you go to shoot pictures," the spokesman notes. This would let you store many more photos.

The capacity of some media is getting large enough to replace videotape in digital video recorders. Stacey Wu, senior industry analyst with Mobile Insights, sees the imaging market dividing into two segments. "With camcorders, you need a longer runtime and a lower cost per storage, whereas with [still] cameras, you want to make sure it's small," she says.

Sony, meanwhile, is developing a version of the Memory Stick that's half the size of current models. "The purpose of an ultrasmall type of flash media is to open the door for wearable electronics, like a wristwatch camera or a portable audio device that you could wear like a piece of jewelry," Neiman explains.

already had enough choices with existing CompactFlash and SmartMedia cards," Sanders recalls.

SanDisk's Rotbert puts it more bluntly. "The consumer-electronics market is divided in two," he says. "You've got Sony, and then you've got the rest of the world."

Even though the Memory Stick hasn't been widely adopted by other manufacturers, Stacey Wu, senior industry analyst with mobile computing and communications market-research firm Mobile Insights *(www.mobileinsights.com)*, estimates that Sony has a solid 25 percent of the market in flash memory.

And that share is likely to grow. "Due to the number of cameras Sony is selling, Memory Stick devices are poised to overtake SmartMedia and possibly CompactFlash in the next couple of years," Sanders predicts.

BEYOND FLASH

Even though flash memory has dropped almost 50 percent in price during the past year and is now averaging less than $1 per megabyte, that cost is still many times higher than that of magnetic and optical media. Cheaper alternatives, in packages almost as small, have begun to emerge.

Although the tiny IBM Microdrive is a magnetic hard drive, you can use it with most devices that have a CompactFlash Type II slot. And with capacities of up to 1GB, the Microdrive has quickly found several niches.

"[It's] penetrating the midrange to upper range of the digital-camera market," says John Osterhout, worldwide marketing director for IBM's Storage Technology Division *(www.storage.ibm.com)*. The Microdrive is also gaining popularity for use in Windows CE-compatible PDAs such as the Compaq iPaq.

Competing with the Microdrive is the Fire & Forget from CMS Peripherals *(www.cmsperipherals.com)*, a credit-card-size drive that fits into a PC Card slot. This device offers a standard IDE drive and built-in backup software. Toshiba's 1.8-inch hard drive is another PC Card contender, and miniature USB hard drives and removable drives such as M-Systems' keychain-mounted DiskOnKey *(www.diskonkey.com)* and Iomega's PocketZip, formerly known as Clik *(www.iomega.com)*, are also vying for the PDA and notebook storage markets.

Though tiny magnetic drives are making inroads in applications that require the highest capacity, it's a supercheap optical disc called DataPlay that has the industry abuzz. "It could take a heck of a lot of market share away from CompactFlash," says analyst Jim Porter, president of storage research firm Disk/Trend *(www.disktrend.com)*. DataPlay, developed by a startup company of the same name *(www.dataplay.com)*, aims to be "a universal media for the distribution and record-

Stowaways: Comparing Storage Options

	Advantages	Disadvantages	Maximum Capacity	Cost per Megabyte	Often Found in...
MAGNETIC STORAGE	Low cost per megabyte	Larger drive/media; moving parts			
Floppies/SuperDisks	Cheap; ubiquitous	Large form factor; low capacity	1.44MB (floppy); 120MB (SuperDisk)	10 to 30 cents	Some Sony Mavica, Canon PalmCam digicams
IBM Microdrive	Highest capacity for size	Requires less common CF Type II slot; high power draw	1GB	35 to 65 cents	PDAs, high-end digicams
PC Card and USB hard drives	Very high capacity; cheap; drive accepts CF, SM cards	Too large for smaller devices	2GB or more	Varies; less than 25 cents	Notebooks, PDAs
PocketZip	Cheap removable media	PC Card/USB only	40MB (100MB announced)	20 to 35 cents	Notebooks, PDAs
FLASH MEMORY	Solid-state; small	More expensive			
CompactFlash (CF)	Widely used; highest flash capacity; open standard	Largest flash form factor	512MB	90 cents to $2	Digicams, audio players
SmartMedia (SM)	Widely used; very thin	No on-card controller; limited capacity; exposed contacts	128MB	75 cents to $1.25	Digicams, audio players
MultiMediaCard (MMC)	Ultrasmall; open standard	Limited capacity	64MB (128MB later this year)	$1.25 to $2.50	Audio players, phones, Palm m500/m505
Secure Digital (SD)	Ultrasmall; built-in security	Limited capacity	64MB (128MB later this year)	$1.50 to $3	Audio players, phones, Palm m500/m505
Memory Stick	Small; cross-application; built-in security	Slow transfer rate; proprietary Sony standard	128MB (256MB next year)	$1.25 to $2	Sony digicams, Network Walkman, Aibo
OPTICAL/MAGNETO-OPTICAL	Very cheap media	Large drive; moving parts			
3-inch CD-R	Cheap	Write-once; bulky camera	165MB	3 cents	Sony MVC-CD1000
DataPlay	Cheap; small; masterable; cross-application; built-in security	Write-once; drive may add size and cost to devices	500MB	2 cents	Not yet available
iD Photo	Cheap; high capacity for size; rewritable	Not widely available; expensive cameras	730MB	5 cents	Sanyo iDShot camera
MiniDisc	Cheap; rewritable	Real-time transfer rate; no native MP3 support	140MB	2 cents	Audio players

* **SS** = Steve Sanders, Steve's Digicams; **SW** = Stacey Wu, Mobile Insights; **JP** = Jim Porter, Disk/Trend

ing of all forms of digital content," according to Ray Uhlir, DataPlay's vice president of marketing.

The DataPlay medium is a tiny cartridge, slightly larger than a quarter, that contains a rotating optical disc. It fits into a special drive built into a camera, audio player, or stand-alone reader. The first DataPlay devices are scheduled to hit the shelves in the first quarter of 2002.

What has people talking is the cost of DataPlay's media: approximately $10 for a 500MB disc. Like CD-R, DataPlay is write-once, meaning you can't erase what you put on it. The theory, however, is that at 2 cents per megabyte, you can afford disposability.

Prerecorded content is also a big part of DataPlay's strategy. Optical media is masterable, meaning content can be quickly stamped onto it, whereas Flash media must be written, a time-consuming process that makes large-scale duplication difficult.

"Even if flash were pennies per megabyte, it would not be a viable media for distribution of content," Uhlir says. Music-industry giants BMG, EMI, and Universal will all distribute content at launch, according to Uhlir, who adds that DataPlay is in the final stages of negotiations with several other content providers.

Digital-camera makers have experimented with other storage formats, too. A few models in Sony's Mavica line, for example, use standard 1.44MB floppy disks, and some of Panasonic's PalmCams accept 120MB SuperDisk floppies. Sony also offers three Mavica cameras that write to miniature 3-inch CD-Rs. (Two of them can also write to 3-inch CD-RW discs.) Another high-end photography contender is Sanyo's 730MB iD Photo magneto-optical disc, developed with Hitachi and Olympus.

Meanwhile, in the audio market, Sony's MiniDisc (MD) format is showing that it still has a lot of life left in it. Although prerecorded MD software never caught on in the United States, the MP3 explosion has given a boost to this magneto-optical format.

"We've been very successful with our MiniDisc-to-PC link," Sony's Neiman says. Current MD recorders cannot, however, store audio directly in MP3 format. Rather, you play an audio file on your computer, and the audio stream is recorded to the MD in real time, much like dubbing an album onto a cassette.

The analysts say*

"It requires a physically large camera, and everyone is trying to make them smaller." —SS

"Professional photographers tend to use the IBM Microdrive." —JP

"Competing in similar space to the Microdrive." —SW

"Too little storage capacity and too late to the market." —SS

"Still has a good 18 months to two years as the flash-market leader." —SW

"Have been called StupidMedia because of the lack of an embedded controller." —SS

"The vast majority are used in MP3 music players." —SS

"Some vendors will consider supporting both SD and CF." —SW

"Sony has tremendous influence. It's not going to be like Betamax." —SW

"I don't think Sony has sold these in very great numbers so far." —SS

"The biggest newcomer that the other guys on the block are currently worried about." —JP

"We're still waiting for it." —SS

"Their market presence right now is quite significant." —SW

GET YOUR SCORECARDS READY

Now that we've covered all the major players, who's winning the game? Well, it's really several games. Each of the major portable-electronics product categories (PDAs, digital cameras, and audio players) is a market unto itself, and no single storage format functions optimally for all of them.

Across all these markets, analysts agree that the popularity of SmartMedia is on the wane. "This year, CompactFlash surpassed SmartMedia in market share," says Rotbert of SanDisk, which still makes cards in both formats.

While you can still find many SmartMedia-compatible digital cameras and audio players, SmartMedia's limited capacity and lack of an on-card controller make it a format whose heyday has passed.

For digital still cameras, CompactFlash is the current king, says Sanders of Steve's Digicams. "It's by far the most compatible and offers the largest capacity."

At the same time, the IBM Microdrive has been a blessing for professional photographers at the high end of the digital-camera spectrum. With the Microdrive, they often have no need to swap out storage modules the entire time they're on a shoot.

Power consumption can be an issue with the Microdrive when it's used with smaller devices, Sanders notes, but it's much less of a factor with high-end cameras. "Professional cameras like the Nikon D1X, Canon D30, and Kodak DCS series have much larger batteries, so they have no trouble powering a Microdrive," he says.

Then, of course, there's Sony. "Sony has stated that [it] fully intends to dominate the digicam market in the next couple of years," Sanders says. "And so far, [the company has] been cranking out new camera models at an exhaustive rate." He notes that more Sony cameras typically mean greater Memory Stick sales.

In portable audio, the compact MultiMediaCard and Secure Digital formats are going strong. "For MP3 players, a lot of the new designs are SD and MMC," Rotbert says. Meanwhile, thanks to the Walkman brand and its long history in the portable-audio market, Sony continues to be a major player. The MD and Memory Stick Walkman models offer the consumer a choice between lower cost and higher performance, says Christine Battagliese, marketing manager for Sony's Network Walkman division. "[MD] is a real-time transfer from PC to recorder, while the Memory Stick is a high-speed transfer," she says.

Security is paramount to music publish-

ers, and storage providers have responded to this need. Sony's offering is the MagicGate version of the Memory Stick, used in the company's audio products. "[MagicGate] incorporates extra copyright-protection technology for the storage and transfer of secure music files," Battagliese says.

DataPlay's ContentKey security offers similar protection, with innovative possibilities for content publishers. For example, a music company could include 100 of an artist's songs on a DataPlay disc but allow only a few to be playable, giving consumers the option to buy or unlock other songs later via a downloadable key.

Too Much Memory?

Given the bewildering array of portable storage media, it seems that a single standard for all kinds of handheld devices would make more sense.

Don't hold your breath, the experts say. Chuck Westfall, assistant director of technical information at Canon, sums up the prevailing sentiment: "We're in for a period of further instability."

Why? Simply because what works best for digital cameras doesn't necessarily work best for MP3 players, and vice versa.

"I'm inclined to think you'll have a number of standards, one in each of the different types of markets," says Jim Porter, president of storage research firm Disk/Trend.

Even within a single market, don't expect to see much consolidation of formats. Device manufacturers don't necessarily choose a storage format because it offers the most bang for the consumer's buck. Often, a company has a vested financial interest in the success of a format—as evidenced by Sony with its proprietary Memory Stick. Similarly, many of the companies that will make devices using DataPlay, the technology, are also investors in DataPlay, the company.

Other vendors, though, might choose a storage format for the opposite reason: Open standards, such as CompactFlash and MultiMediaCard, are easier to implement, and smaller companies can participate in the development of the standard.

"[With CompactFlash], anyone can build either hosts or cards, and can build to spec without infringing," says Bill Frank, executive director of the CompactFlash Association.

Be assured you haven't seen the last new format. As Steve Sanders, who tracks the digital-camera market on his Web site, Steve's Digicams, notes, "There will always be someone with something different."

PORTABLE STORAGE

Secure versions of CompactFlash and MMC are also on the horizon, each of which will be backward-compatible with its predecessor. Two SecureMMC cards are planned, says Andrew Prophet, executive director of the MultiMediaCard Association *(www.mmca.org)*. The first is an e-commerce card designed for what he calls "very robust applications." The second, already shipping in Japan, adds optional commands for content copyright protection.

A secure CompactFlash standard has recently been approved as well. "[It's] using basically the same technology that's used in the SD card," the CompactFlash Association's Frank says, adding that the additional cost per card is about 5 cents.

In the PDA arena, Wu of Mobile Insights believes the SD format is winning, citing Palm's adoption of the technology for its newest PDAs. "In the coming months, you're going to see more announcements supporting SD," she adds.

But the IBM Microdrive is also building steam. "It's starting to be used in some PDAs, like the iPaq and the HP Jornada," IBM's Osterhout says.

And what will happen with DataPlay?

"We're really impressed with its technology," Wu says. But this promising newcomer has several hurdles to overcome. Some wonder how many smaller devices will be able to incorporate it, given that it requires a relatively large drive mechanism.

Frank of the CompactFlash Association raises another concern. "Can they get the drive price down, so they don't have to increase the price of the host device too much?" he asks.

Still, companies such as Eastman Kodak, Olympus, Samsung, and Toshiba have already signed on to manufacture DataPlay devices, and many in the industry are enthusiastic.

"The kicker will be how many major content publishers decide to use it," says Disk/Trend's Porter.

THE MEDIA IS THE MESSAGE

What does this all mean to the portable-electronics buyer? First, it's important to remember that you can't really choose your media. Once you purchase a device, you're limited by whatever it accepts.

Digital cameras are a prime example. "You don't have much choice in storage media unless your camera has a CompactFlash Type II slot and is Microdrive-compatible," Sanders says. "Otherwise, you use whatever media your camera was designed to use."

Therefore, when you're choosing a portable device, it pays to make the type of storage media it uses a factor in your choice. Figure out how much storage you're going to need and how much you're willing to spend for it, then choose accordingly. Make sure to take potential future expansion into account. You can start with a 128MB CompactFlash card and move up to 512MB if need be, but if you start with a 128MB SmartMedia card, you currently have no higher-capacity options.

SanDisk's database of camera models and the cards with which they're compatible *(www.sandisk.com/tech/comp.asp)* is a good resource. You'll also find a list of MP3-hardware reviews categorized by media type at the MP3 community site DMusic *(hardware.dmusic.com)*.

Incompatibility aside, all this competition has resulted in lower prices and better devices. There's every indication that portable storage media will keep getting, in Rotbert's words, "smaller, faster, and cheaper." ▼

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ONLINE SHOPPING SECRETS

Secrets of Online Power Shopping

BY RICK BROIDA

E-tailers offer cool tools to help you shop better, smarter, and more often.

Scott Johnson makes a lot of wishes. While browsing for DVDs and computer books at Amazon.com, the 31-year-old game designer frequently finds himself adding items to his wish list, a tool designed to help shoppers keep track of items they plan to buy in the future (or hope others will buy for them).

"I'm a slave to the wish list," Johnson admits. The convenience of having his sought-after items cataloged in one place, he adds, means he pays less attention to price. "If an item survives for long," he says, meaning if someone doesn't buy it for him, or he himself doesn't delete it from the list, "I will eventually buy it."

Johnson is the kind of customer who makes Web vendors salivate, and his business is the reason behind the recent explosion of e-commerce tools such as the wish list. In the early days of online shopping, the most help a buyer could hope for was a FAQ detailing shipping costs and return policies. But with companies such as Amazon leading the charge, modern e-tailers have created a host of tools designed to attract, assist, and retain customers.

"This was part of the promise of the Internet," says e-commerce consultant Jill Frankle, who believes today's online shopping tools lead to an empowered consumer. Web vendors are providing a very good consumer experience and in the process are strengthening existing relationships, she says.

Clinton Schmidt, senior manager of customer acquisition for Half.com ***(www.half.com)***, believes the development of tools such as these is part of the natural evolution of e-commerce.

"Over time, you're going to hone your service to become more competitive and better meet customers' needs," he says.

Just what kinds of honing have vendors done? At electronics shop 800.com ***(www.800.com)***, you can specify the kind of car

you drive, and the site will list the receivers, speakers, and other audio products that fit your model. Half.com offers a free utility called Price Patrol that shows you Half.com's prices while you're shopping at other sites. And Amazon lets you earn credits toward future purchases when family and friends buy the same items you buy.

The use of such tools raises the usual concerns over privacy. For instance, what does Amazon do with the names and e-mail addresses gleaned from wish lists and referrals? Does the Price Patrol software secretly tell Half.com what other sites you shopped at? Most major e-commerce vendors have stringent privacy policies that should allay your fears, but the policies aren't binding. Pay close attention to the fine print if you're concerned. (See the sidebar "Big Brother Probably Isn't Watching You" for more information.)

ILLUSTRATION BY BEK SHAKIROV

As we take a closer look at these and other helpful money-saving e-commerce amenities, keep in mind you can reap the benefits of these features onsite or off. Build a wish list at Amazon, then search elsewhere to find better prices. Learn all about RAM at Kingston Technology ***(www.kingston.com)***, then apply that knowledge to the purchase of a new PC wherever you find the best price. After all, easy comparison-shopping is one of the great conveniences of e-commerce.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE

Let's say you're shopping for a new computer and don't know how much RAM you need. You've fallen in love with the music of David Gray and want to check out similar artists. Or it's Aunt Judy's 60th birthday, and you can't figure out what to buy her. Modern e-commerce tools can make recommendations based on your likes and dislikes, or on those of the lucky recipient.

Take the RAM issue, a common one PC buyers face. While you browse for or configure a system at Gateway's online store ***(www.gateway.com)***, you can engage in a real-time chat with an eSales Advisor, a live person who answers questions and makes recommendations. At the beginning of the session, Gateway gives you the name, e-mail address, and phone number of the advisor. Nicer still, at the end of the session, you get a transcript of the chat via e-mail.

Etronics.com ***(www.etronics.com)*** takes a slightly different approach to offering assistance with your electronic purchases. While viewing the listing for any given product,

you can click on the Expert Advice button, which produces a pop-up window in which you can pose a question. Your reply arrives sometime later via e-mail—not the fastest way to get answers, but more convenient than hunting for customer-service e-mail addresses.

When it comes to gift-buying assistance, lots of sites have sections devoted expressly to that need. At GiftCatalog.com ***(www.giftcatalog.com)***, for instance, you can shop by occasion, interest, or recipient. Within each of these categories, you can drill down to more specific headings, specifying a price range. With a few clicks, you can see a variety of gift choices for, say, your favorite gardener, all priced between $30 and $70.

Perhaps no single shopping tool is as powerful as the related-product recommendation, which shows you items similar to the one you're viewing or have bought. This tool is particularly helpful with subjective materials such as books and music. A site can introduce you to authors and artists who might not normally appear on your shopping radar—or you can enter a friend's favorite book and get a great gift recommendation.

"Amazon.com is the king of 'people who bought X also bought Y,'" says Johnson, who finds such recommendations invaluable. "I've found many good books I otherwise would not have known about."

In addition to spotlighting related items, Amazon lets users rate any product on a scale of one to five stars and comment on it, thus giving other buyers a chance to see real-world opinions. Taking this idea a step further, Web sites such as 800.com include discussion forums where shoppers can post questions and seek and share advice. Smart shoppers, however, will take these amenities with a grain of salt: There's no guarantee information gleaned from a message board is accurate, and rating systems don't tell you the story behind the score, such as the ages of voters—or the companies for which they work. But despite these caveats, many shoppers find the data helpful in making decisions.

"We often use Amazon.com's and Babiesrus.com's online reviews to pick out selections of books, videos, and strollers," says chemical engineer Daniel Behl. "They came from other like-minded shoppers—parents with kids. Amazon's reviews often include personal commentary that helps us connect with how the media will read or play into our tastes."

Buy It Online, Pick It Up Onsite

After weeks of research and shopping, you've finally settled on a DVD player. Now comes the agonizing wait while the order is processed, filled, and shipped. It could take a week or two before the unit lands on your doorstep—or you could have it in about an hour if you shop at stores such as Best Buy ***(www.bestbuy.com)*** and Circuit City ***(www.circuitcity.com)***. The Web outlets for these electronics superstores offer a benefit Amazon can't match: the option to pick up your online purchases at the nearest brick-and-mortar location.

"One of the main purposes of BestBuy.com was to integrate it with our stores," says Barry Judge, vice president of marketing. "A lot of people do their research online, and if they can have [their purchases] the same day, it's easier for them."

He also notes that the Best Buy site often runs Web-only promotions, but customers can still pick up these purchases rather than have them shipped. And if they're not satisfied, they can return the product to any store.

"Beats having to ship it back and wait and worry," he says.

A MODEL WORLD

Sometimes, advice about a product isn't enough. It's one thing to hear other people's comments about a pair of chinos; it's another to check the fit. You can't try on pants in cyberspace.

Or can you? Clothing retailer Land's End ***(www.landsend.com)*** provides tools to create a simplistic 3D model of your body so you can "try on" shirts, pants, and shoes. If the apparel looks good on the virtual you, you should like it on the actual you. Once you've created the virtual model, you can use it at other sites.

By providing more than a flat, static view of their products, e-tailers are challenging the Web's inherent limitations, such as the inability to see how thin a new PDA really is. At Handspring's site ***(www.handspring.com)***, you can look at a 3D representation of the Visor Edge. The photo-realistic model spins a full 360 degrees, and a magnifying tool offers a close-up view. It's a similar story at MSN's Carpoint ***(www.carpoint.com)***: You can't test-drive a new car, but you can "walk around" the outside to see how it looks from every angle and take in a 360-degree view of the interior. And in FAO Schwarz's virtual playroom ***(www.fao.com)***, you can "play" with a 3D model of a toy before buying it.

Though such tools may seem like little more than novelties, some have proven valuable to a company's bottom line. At Land's End, the average order value is 16 percent higher when a customer uses My Virtual Model, according to Andrea Stephenson, Internet communications manager. And customers who use it are 90 percent more likely to buy than those who don't.

WISH UPON A WEB SITE

As Scott Johnson attested, the wish list, a personalized holding tank for items you plan to buy later or want others to know you want, is another popular craze hitting online stores. At shops such as Amazon and 800.com, you can e-mail an invitation to view your list to family and friends. Although this takes away some of the mystery of receiving gifts, it simplifies your benefactors' shopping and helps ensure you get what you want.

Some sites make wish lists searchable, meaning anyone who knows your name can see your list. That's great when your long-lost Uncle Frank wants to surprise you with a birthday present. But if you use your list solely for personal shopping, you may not want the world to view every item—your boss, for instance, may not understand your fascination with collectible Barbie dolls. Before you start using a wish list at any store, check the site's privacy options. At Amazon.com, for instance, it's up to you whether your wish list is searchable. You can opt to make it visible only to those you specify.

The wish list is the most popular shopping tool at Half.com, according to Schmidt. (Half.com brokers the sale of used products between buyers and sellers, and not every item is always in stock.) When first introduced, the wish list quickly became known as the "killer app," he says,

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because users adopted it so widely and rapidly. It led to the creation of an offshoot tool, the Pre-Order List, which lets customers automatically buy items as soon as they become available and meet specific criteria, such as price and condition.

The wish list is the descendant of a time-honored tradition, the gift registry. Many traditional registries, such as those for weddings or baby showers, are now available online. The next time you're invited to a major gift-giving event, ask if the gift registry is available online. Department stores such as JCPenney ***(www.jcpenney.com)*** and Marshall Field's ***(www.marshallfields.com)*** now let you view registries and order gifts on their sites, saving you a trip to the mall. This is particularly helpful for family and friends spread across the globe who may not have access to particular brick-and-mortar stores. What's more, unlike the printed list you get when you visit a department store, the online version of the registry lets you filter out the items that have already been bought, and even sort the list by price. Of course, if you're the one receiving the gifts, you can create and modify your registry online.

SOUPED-UP SHOPPING CART

Some vendors have even outfitted the online shopping cart, the virtual version of the wobbly-wheeled basket, with a few innovations. Traditional carts store your purchases until you're ready to check out. But what happens if you're shopping for a big-ticket item like a PC, which involves lots of custom configuration? If you leave the site to comparison-shop, what happens to all the changes you made?

A few vendors, including Gateway and IBM ***(www.ibm.com)***, let you save your quote in a kind of semipermanent holding bin, so you don't have to "rebuild" your machine each time you visit the site. Because you know your quote won't vanish overnight, you won't feel rushed into making this major purchase.

At computer-reseller sites such as Outpost.com ***(www.outpost.com)*** and PCMall ***(www.pcmall.com)***, before an item ever drops into your shopping cart you can e-mail its description to a colleague or friend to solicit advice. ("Do you think this CD-RW drive is a good deal?") Outpost.com's Build Your Own Bundle shows related items you may need or want (such as a 10-pack of blank discs to go with the CD-RW drive).

ONLINE SHOPPING SECRETS

HEADS UP

Sometimes the best shopping tools are the simplest. Take advantage of the automated reminders and price-drop alerts e-tailers and comparison sites provide to inform you of better deals and important upcoming occasions. PriceGrabber.com's Product Tracker ***(www.pricegrabber.com)***, for instance, lets you specify a target price for any given item. Once it finds a vendor that matches your price, it notifies you via e-mail so you can complete your purchase. Half.com's wish list works in much the same way, sending you a missive when a product you want meets your price.

If you're the forgetful type, take advantage of the gift-reminder services of vendors large and small. At designated times (usually two to three weeks prior to the occasion), you'll receive a message reminding you it's time to shop for that birthday or anniversary gift—and offering some ideas.

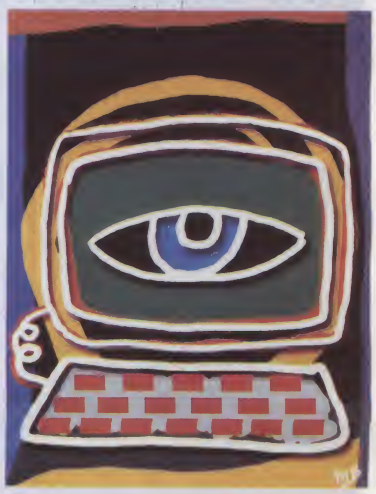
Finally, for the frugal shopper, the Web is replete with referral, rebate, and discount programs. Amazon's Share the Love program, for instance, lets you offer an extra 10 percent discount to your family and friends, whose purchases in turn earn you credit toward future purchases. Similarly, at Gateway's site, you can earn a $25 Future Purchase Credit whenever a family member or friend buys a new PC using your referral code. Gateway also offers AARP discounts on PCs and in-store training classes. Be sure to look for such a program before you buy.

THE CHECKOUT LANE

From wish lists to referral programs to virtual mannequins that look like you, the latest shopping tools represent a win-win scenario. They cost you nothing to use, they're optional, and you can access them at one Web site to buy products from another. Best of all, they transform an ordinary shopping experience into one that's practical and fun. ▼

Big Brother Probably Isn't Watching You

When you send your wish list to a few dozen relatives and friends, what else happens to those names and e-mail addresses? Does the vendor record them for use in future marketing efforts? Does it track the recipients' buying patterns? And when you use a tool such as Half.com's Price Patrol, does it secretly monitor the sites you visit? It's only natural for sophisticated shopping tools like these to raise privacy concerns, but most vendors seem to be taking the high road, at least for now.



"We keep the golden rule of privacy," says Half.com's Clinton Schmidt, senior manager of customer acquisition. The company's Price Patrol, which "watches" you shop at other sites to supply competitive Half.com prices, sounds a bit nefarious, but Schmidt insists it neither monitors customers' site visitation nor transmits any of their Web activities to Half.com.

At Amazon.com, when you invite others to view your wish list, a disclaimer promises to keep your recipients' information confidential: "Rest assured, we'll use these e-mail addresses only to send your message about your Wish List." In other words, you won't be generating spam for your loved ones.

Each vendor has its own policy when it comes to accessing and using your personal information. These procedures can change, particularly if the company is acquired or goes out of business. If you're concerned, read the privacy policy, which should be clearly posted. If the vendor has no such policy or the language is vague, you may want to shop elsewhere.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARC BRUCE

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†prices, configuration & product availability are subject to change without notice.

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Web Buyer

Cheap Musical Thrills

Still stuck in a post-Napster funk? Lend an ear to these sites for inexpensive—and sometimes free—digital music.

BY KEVIN SAVETZ

Disclaimer: *This article discusses a topic that some readers might find distasteful—paying for digital music. Those who are offended by the idea of shelling out real money for musical entertainment should turn the page now.*

Sure, grabbing gratis music with Napster was great, but like many things in life, it was too good to last. Besides, those "stolen" MP3 files we enjoyed so freely were often riddled with annoying audio glitches and potentially negative karmic baggage.

Yes, free alternatives to Napster have cropped up (more on that later), but you can also find some great sources for legitimate—official, affordable, and guilt-free—digital-audio files. With an open mind (and wallet) you can download "nice 'n' legal" digital tunes. Plus, the free ride isn't completely over, as most of these sites offer complimentary tunes in addition to pay-for-play.

Start by pointing your browser to **MP3.com** ***(www.mp3.com)***. The free arm of the site offers a million songs that you can listen to online. Most of the bands you'll find here are unsigned (that's industry code for "never heard of 'em"), but the site's popularity charts will help you weed out the dreck. If you like what you hear, you can pay to download an entire album. Pony up three bucks a month for the subscription service, and you can download those songs to your portable player and burn your favorites to custom CDs.

Sonicnet.com ***(www.sonicnet.com)***, part of the company that owns a little station called MTV, is more likely to serve up music from the bands you (or, at least, your kids) have heard of. The site's MP3 section offers a respectable selection from popular artists. Pay to download an entire album, or snag selected sample tracks for free.

EMusic.com ***(www.emusic.com)*** is another subscription service that will let you download all the music your ears can handle. For $14.99 a month ($9.99 a month if you sign up for a year), it provides access to over 180,000 songs from 8,000 artists ranging from Louis Armstrong to Frank Zappa.

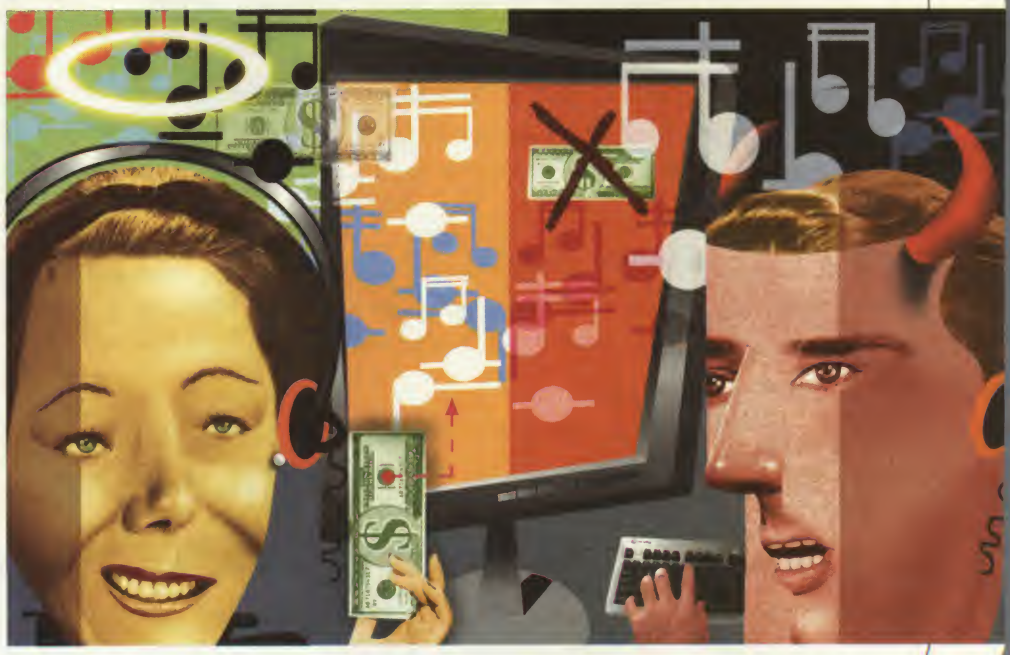
Still hungry for even more music? **Artist-Direct's** ***(listen.artistdirect.com)*** free MP3 page is a huge plate of aural hors d'oeuvres. Nosh on sample songs from popular artists, then if you crave a full serving, the site will sell you the CD. **Liquid Audio** ***(www.liquid.com)*** pours on the tunes in genres from rap to reggae, but many of these are in a proprietary format that requires a special player.

Don't feel left out if these sites skip over your favorite style of music. A variety of niche sites specialize in particular genres. Check out **Insound** ***(www.insound.com)*** for garage, underground, and punk; **DownBeat.com** ***(www.downbeat.com)*** for jazz notes; **eClassical.com** ***(www.eclassical.com)*** for the classics; **Technomusic.com** ***(www.technomusic.com)*** for synth goodness; or **Rapstation.com** ***(www.rapstation.com)*** for a dose of hard-core rhymes.

For times when you can't bury your nose in a book—while driving, for instance—spoken-word audio can be a great way to keep yourself entertained. The selection at **Audible.com** ***(www.audible.com)*** includes popular books, current magazines, and newspapers. You can enjoy exclusive content, such as wacky commentary from Robin Williams, or catch up with news in *The Wall Street Journal* without getting newsprint on your fingers. The site offers some free content, but deals mostly in pay subscriptions to regularly updated periodicals and one-time flat-fee book or novel downloads.

A custom CD can make a truly unique gift. **CDnow** ***(www.cdnow.com)*** enables you to woo your sweetie with your own mix of love songs or golden oldies, even if you don't have a CD burner. The site is stocked with more than 10,000 tunes, but be sure to know what you want—there's no search engine and you can't mix songs from different musical genres.

So now you know plenty of ways to get music online legally and inexpensively. But for those who still believe copyright infringement adds a little excitement to tracking down those digital tunes, yes, you *can* still find plenty of free MP3s. **Aimster** ***(www.aimster.com)***, **BearShare** ***(www.bearshare.com)***, **Gnotella** ***(www.gnotella.com)***, **Lime Wire** ***(www.limewire.com)***, and **Morpheus** ***(www.musiccity.com)*** are just a few thriving peer-to-peer tools that can help you snag free online music as well as images, movies, and other types of media files. But note that if your digital-music thievery drives you mad with remorse, we cannot accept liability. ▼



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WebBuyer

SITE REVIEWS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

BY KEVIN SAVETZ

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<Tech Shopping

aberdeeninc.com

Targeting the savvy consumer who craves speeds and feeds, **Aberdeen** offers extensive specs on a wide variety of computers and accessories.

accessmicro.com

Need a gift for that special someone who has everything? Check out **Access Micro,** which stocks tons of items ranging from T1 routers to complete desktop systems. The help desk and hardware guide provide aid to first-time visitors, and the clearance area offers returned items and old inventory for below wholesale cost.

allstarshop.com

The **Allstar Microelectronics** catalog of PC accessories includes graphics cards, motherboards, and peripherals. The selection in some categories is modest, but prices are reasonable, and you'll see an ample amount of information about each product.

blackbox.com

Get connected! Specializing in network products, **Black Box's** extensive 900-page catalog of storage, cabling, and surge-protection products—plus other connectivity accessories—can be viewed online or off.

buy.com

This monstrous, multifaceted site sells computers, electronics, books, movies, office products, and more. With a whopping 1 million items, **Buy.com** offers a price-matching policy on most of them.

buycase.com

Banish the boring beige box forever! **Colorcase** offers more than 60 unusual computer cases, including translucent-plastic, aluminum, mirrored, and "character" cases. (Be sure to check out the doggy- and kitty-shaped cases.)

buydig.com

A site for shovels and trowels? No, **BuyDig.Com** offers digital tools and gadgets including digital cameras, fax machines, PDAs, DVD players, and video-capture devices.

cablestogo.com

Cables To Go sells every conceivable cable you might need for your PC, from standard SCSI to esoteric system-specific cables. You'll also find networking products, bulk cable, tools, and test equipment. You might even get lucky and snatch up what you need at a bargain price in the site's closeout section.

www.cd-recordable.com

The U.S-owned and -based **CD-Recordable Factory Store** actually manufactures the discs it sells. This easy-to-navigate site stocks a massive variety of CD-R discs, including colorless and tinted media, plus disc-packaging and -storage accessories.

cdw.com

CDW offers an enormous array of hardware and software for business. Create side-by-side comparisons in many product categories, and search out dollar-saving deals on the rebates-and-coupons page.

compgeeks.com

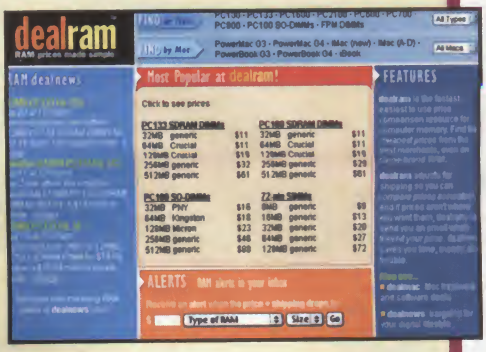
Revenge of the nerds, indeed! Shop the **Computer Geeks Discount Outlet** for new, discontinued, and refurbished computer gear. It's a trove for the do-it-yourselfer piecing together a desktop system. The site features low prices and complete specs on every product.

NOVEMBER

COMPUTER SHOPPER site OF THE month

dealram.com

Given recently plummeting memory prices, it's a great time to give your PC an adrenaline boost by upgrading your system's RAM. Before you buy, try **Dealram,** a new price-comparison search engine from the folks at Dealnews. Just tell the site the type of RAM and the amount of memory you need. It quickly generates a list of online sellers that offer the RAM you require, along with prices so you can make side-by-side comparisons.



Macintosh users can easily choose their models from a list at the site to see prices of compatible memory. PC users don't have it so easy—they'll need to know the type of memory their particular system requires, such as PC133 or FPM DIMMs.

Any frequent online shopper knows a good deal can be sidelined by hefty shipping charges, so Dealram's prices include the estimated cost of shipping. If the RAM a vendor offers is branded, Dealram will tell you its maker but will also offer generic alternatives that usually command lower prices.

Dealram makes one thing crystal clear: It pays to shop around. When we checked, one popular type of RAM module available from several merchants ranged in price from $16 to $65. If the memory you need costs more than you're willing to pay, use the Alerts feature, which will send you an e-mail when your chips fall below a price you set.

SITE REVIEWS

compuplus.com

Comp-U-Plus offers free technical support and a 30-day money-back guarantee on all the peripherals it sells. The catalog isn't exactly earth-shattering in scope, but the prices are reasonable, and plenty of name brands are represented.

Comp-U-Plus

compusa.com

The well-organized **CompUSA** rounds out the usual selection of PC hardware, peripherals, and accessories with areas devoted to electronics and gadgets. The frugal won't want to overlook the site's outlet section.

computergate.com

In business since 1991, **Computer Gate** promises a 30-day satisfaction return policy on its products, which include peripherals and build-to-order PCs. Check out the Quick Index: You'll never have to poke around for the right product again.

computers4sure.com

In the 19 well-stocked departments at **Computers-4Sure.com** you'll find a broad spectrum of products, including networking equipment, projectors, PDAs, and scanners. Bargain hunters can quickly sniff out deals on the Clearance pages.

computershopper.com

Computer Shopper's own piece of cyberspace, **computershopper.com,** provides access to product reviews, interactive guides to choosing a desktop or a notebook, and How to Buy sections for the most popular product categories. The site can also help you find an ISP, ASP, or Web host.

computersurplusoutlet.com

You're just crazy enough to build your own desktop system, aren't you? Then you'll feel right at home at **Computer Surplus Outlet,** where you'll find closeouts, overstocks, refurbished equipment, and liquidation items. You might even stumble on an assembly-required Pentium system for less than $100.

crucial.com

One of the largest providers of memory upgrades on the Web, **Crucial Technology** offers free shipping on RAM for 11,000 computer systems. The company backs its memory with a lifetime warranty.

cyberwarehouse.com

CyberWarehouse deals in refurbished PCs and notebooks from heavy hitters such as Compaq, HP, and IBM. You'll also find a limited selection of peripherals and software. The site's catalog is small, but the discounts are deep.

dalco.com

Dalco Electronics stocks everything from motherboards to monitors. If you're a bargain hunter, start with the specials found on the home page, which change regularly. You'll also find a helpful motherboard/CPU and memory configurator.

dartek.com

With a roster of more than 100,000 products, **Dartek** peddles an impressive selection of hardware, software, networking equipment, and office furniture. Well-designed features include printable spec sheets, customers' product ratings, a product-watch feature, and a frequent-buyers' club.

directron.com

Specializing in computer peripherals, **Directron.com** offers low prices on a wide variety of name-brand and OEM products. Most items include a 30-day guarantee, and any order earns you the right to pick through the Free Stuff bin. Savvy savers will appreciate the Clearance area, as well as frequent-customer and volume-purchasing discounts.

dirtcheapdrives.com

If you can store data on it, this site sells it. **Dirt Cheap Drives** offers hard drives, CD-ROM and DVD hardware, and drive arrays, with detailed technical information about each product. This decade-old company also stocks mounting kits, media, and accessories.

ecost.com

The **eCost.com** catalog spans the full range of PC hardware and software, including ready-to-use systems, peripherals, accessories, and applications. The site features fastidious organization and personalized product recommendations.

egghead.com

Egghead.com shoppers can lose themselves in the site's hardware, software, office-product, and electronics superstores. Corporate users will find volume pricing, leasing information, and software licensing in the business center.

elinux.com

At **eLinux** you'll find a whopping 42,000 hardware and software products. The site is so serious about Linux, many of its desktop and notebook systems don't come bundled with that "other" OS. Special offerings include Linux news and a community forum.

emscomputing.com

EMS Computing offers a 40,000-product catalog, an easy-to-navigate site, and low shipping charges. A monthly newsletter delivers informative tips on choosing and using computer accessories.

www.freecolorprinters.com

It's not a scam—"qualified organizations" can indeed apply for free color printers at **FreeColorPrinters,** a subsidiary of Xerox Corp. You'll need to commit to printing a certain number of pages per month and buy your supplies directly from Xerox. See the site for more details.

fwdepot.com

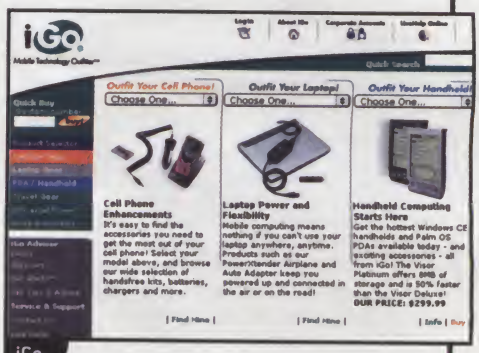
FireWire Depot serves up IEEE 1394 (FireWire) stuff for your compatible computer. The site's selection includes drives, cases, cables, and IEEE 1394 upgrade cards. The buyer's guide provides insightful answers to frequently asked fiery questions.

harddrive.com

Pack rat? **HardDrive.com** has your storage solution. Choosy shoppers will find extensive choices in IDE, SCSI, and IEEE 1394 (FireWire) drives, along with other peripherals. For fashion-forward computer users, the site offers an array of black PC components, from cases to scanners. After all, black *does* go with everything.

hypermicro.com

Hyper Microsystems specializes in storage. The catalog includes CD-ROM and CD-RW drives, tape backup drives, hard drives, and RAID adapters. Check the Hyper Bundles for ready-to-use RAID and CD-RW starter kits.



iGo

igo.com

iGo calls itself a "mobile technology outfitter." Use the site to outfit your cell phone, laptop, or PDA with chargers, batteries, and other necessary accessories. The iGo Alerts feature delivers free customized news to your portable device.

inkfarm.com

We're not sure what farm printer ink comes from, but we do know that **Inkfarm.com** sells ink and toner with flat-rate shipping. Choose "official" OEM ink or save money with aftermarket ink that often costs about half the price.

insight.com

With more than 110,000 items for sale, **Insight** offers an impressive catalog of hardware and

SITE REVIEWS

software. Customized sites are available for shoppers in the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

jandr.com

Hardware, software, home-office products, and appliances abound at **J&R Computer World,** the New York City-based superstore famed for its selection and, ahem, "brusque" service. Avoid the attitude with this online version, which specializes in cameras, both digital and traditional film models. Product help is available via e-mail, online chat, and phone.

lanblvd.com

Wrestling with your old router? Network card not working? **LanBlvd.com** specializes in networking products. You'll find hubs, routers, interface cards, and wireless stations, along with other essentials for your LAN.

laptoptravel.com

Laptop Travel is road-warrior heaven! The site sells portable-computing and international-travel gear, including electrical adapters, modem converters/couplers, and security accessories. You'll find traditional and "camouflaged" laptop carrying cases, laptop RAM, and storage add-ons.

linuxcentral.com

Find your alternative at **Linux Central.** The site stocks Linux-friendly hardware, commercial software, and operating-system CD-ROMs. A selection of Linux-compatible T-shirts, hats, and ties will help you flash your alternative tendencies in public.

megahaus.com

MegaHaus' catalog of "everything high-tech" offers a full spectrum of products, from mice to monitors. The site specializes in storage, including hard drives, RAID solutions, and CD recorders.

mei-microcenter.com

MEI-Micro Center offers new and refurbished desktops from Compaq, eMachines, Hewlett-Packard, and PowerSpec. You'll also find a decent selection of peripherals. Rummage through the bargain bin for deals on closeouts, refurbished units, and overstocks.

memman.com

All of the desktop and laptop memory sold at **Memory Man** carries a lifetime warranty, and the site's reference guide offers RAM-configuration info for all brand-name computers.

memory4less.com

Memory4Less.com offers low prices on a wide variety of RAM. If you don't know the memory requirements of your computer or digital camera, the site will help clue you in.

microx-press.com

MicroX-Press offers hardware, software, prebuilt systems, and clearance items, with detailed specs on each. Read the return policy before you order, lest you be stuck with a 15 percent restocking fee.

www.mobile-mania.com

Quickly head to **Mobilemania.com** for digital cameras, e-mail devices, PDAs, cases, and adapters. You'll find the bountiful selection a haven for folks (like you) who are always on the go.

mobileplanet.com

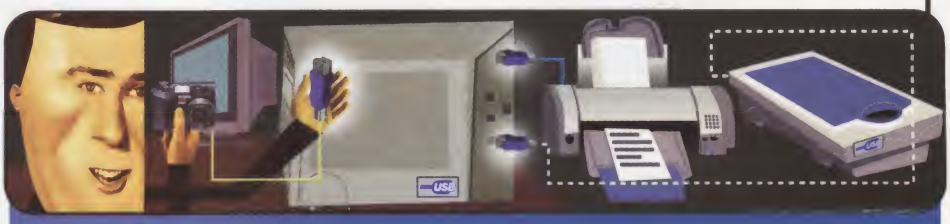
MobilePlanet is home to a gaggle of high-tech tools and toys for mobile professionals. The selection includes notebooks, PDAs, wireless communication products, and travel-size printers and scanners.

mobilizenow.com

On the go? Gear up at **MobilizeNow,** where you'll find the gadgets you need, including GPS receivers, portable radios, and cellular and PDA accessories. Tell the site what country you're headed for, and it will spit out a list of appropriate adapter plugs, phone adapters, and voltage converters.

monitorexpress.com

Monitor Express sells 500 models of new monitors, plus money-saving refurbished ones. The catalog also includes monitor cables, video adapters, and screen filters.



USB Peripherals

allusb.com

AllUSB is a bountiful source of information about the Universal Serial Bus, including product news, reviews, and advice. The cable guide offers information about different types of cabling and tips on using USB cables. The Links page serves up a list of technical, end-user, and industry sites.

usb.org

The official site of the **USB Implementers Forum** provides answers to common questions about everyone's favorite serial bus, discussion groups for developers, and a meticulous list of compatible products.

usbgear.com

Usbgear.com offers a full range of USB peripherals—including joysticks, card readers, and scanners—but specializes in hard drives. The company offers free shipping on orders over $50, but hefty restocking fees will make you think twice before returning a product.

usbmax.com

USBMax stocks an abundance of USB products, from hard drives to video-capture devices. Shoppers will find plenty of information about products, complete with photos of each. The site advertises a 30-day money-back guarantee, but beware the 15 to 25 percent restocking fees.

www.usbstuff.com

USB Stuff offers a vast selection of USB peripherals, adapters, hubs, and cables. You can find plenty of useful and unusual gadgets, but the site is cluttered with links, making navigation difficult.

usbtown.com

You better not pout, because USB is coming to town. **USB Town.com** customers enjoy an extensive selection of USB devices and a liberal return policy. After you've received your gadget, visit the site's driver library to download the latest software for it.

usbworkshop.com

Although it doesn't sell products, **USB Workshop** is a friend to anyone in the market for USB components. You'll find specifications, user ratings, and photos for hundreds of peripherals, cables, and sundry USB-ready contraptions. Explore the lists of most popular and most talked-about products, then zoom in on the peripherals that are compatible with your favorite operating system.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BILL RIESER

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intel inside pentium III

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www.microsoft.com/piracy/howtotell.

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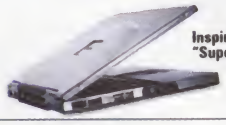

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"Super Slim and Light"

Inspiron 2500
"Affordable Performance"

Inspiron™ 2100 Notebook

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- 12.1" XGA TFT Display
- 128MB SDRAM at 100MHz
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- External 24X CD-ROM
- 4MB AGP 2X ATI® Rage Mobility M™ 3D® Video
- Sound with Wavetable
- 23WHr Li-Ion Battery
- Internal 56K[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001, MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]

$1499 or as low as **$45**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00457-801014m

Recommended upgrades:
- External 8X Max DVD Drive, add $99
- 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service[4] and Lifetime 24x7 Phone Support, add $219
- CompleteCare to any 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2] for accidental system damage (excluding theft, fire and loss), $169

Inspiron™ 2500 Notebook

Great System, Great Price
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 800MHz
- 12.1" SVGA TFT Display
- 64MB Shared SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed Internal 24X CD-ROM
- Intel® Integrated 3D® AGP Video with up to 8MB shared system memory
- SoundBlaster® compatible
- 4-Cell Li-Ion Battery
- Internal 56K[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001, MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]

$999 or as low as **$30**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00457-801009m

Recommended upgrades:
- Notebook Surge Protector, add $30
- Dell Notebook Protection Backpack, add $79
- Targus Defcon Security Device, add $41

Inspiron 4000
"Portable Performance"

Inspiron 8100
"Mega Multimedia"

Inspiron™ 4000 Notebook

Thin and Light
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 900MHz featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 14.1" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 192MB Shared SDRAM at 100MHz
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Modular Removable 8X DVD-ROM Drive
- 8MB AGP 2X ATI® Rage Mobility 128™ 3D® Video
- SoundBlaster® Compatible Sound with Wavetable
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal 56K[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001, MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]

$1779 or as low as **$53**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00457-801017m

Recommended upgrades:
- 30GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive, add $99
- CD-RW Drive, add $120
- 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service[4] and Lifetime 24x7 Phone Support, add $219

Inspiron™ 8100 Notebook

The Ultimate Multimedia Notebook
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.13GHz-M featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 15" Super XGA+ TFT Display
- 256MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- Fixed Internal 8X DVD-ROM Drive
- 32MB DDR NVIDIA® GeForce2 Go® 4X AGP 3D® Video
- Harman Kardon® Odyssey® 2 Speakers (Internal)
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal 56K[6] FaxModem
- MS® Works Suite 2001, MS® Windows® Me
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]

$2399 or as low as **$72**/mo for 45 mos.[12]
No payments for 90 days
for qualified customers.
E-VALUE Code: 00457-801023m

Recommended upgrades:
- 2nd Bay CD-RW Drive, add $179
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.2GHz-M, add $199
- 3-Yr Ltd Warranty[2], 3-Yr Next-Business-Day On-Site Service[4] and Lifetime 24x7 Phone Support, add $219

Performance at any level. Easy as DELL™

Order the easy way. Visit **www.dell4me.com** or call **1-800-247-2057.**

SITE REVIEWS

monitoroutlet.com

From inexpensive 14-inchers to elegant and pricey flat-panel LCDs, **Monitor Outlet** proffers a wide range of displays. The site sells units from 24 manufacturers, plus specialty monitors such as touch screens, wide-aspect-ratio units, and projectors.

motherboardexpress.com

Oh, mama. **Motherboard Express** was made for PC-building connoisseurs. Shoppers can filter the selection of 100-plus boards by manufacturer, chipset, processor type, case type, onboard controller, or number of CPUs.

motherboards.com

With a wide selection of motherboards from seven manufacturers, do-it-yourselfers will revel in handpicking the perfect innards for their new PCs at **Motherboards.com.** Order a motherboard and CPU together, and the company will configure and test them for you.

www.mwave.com

In addition to PC systems and peripherals, **Multiwave Direct** stocks notebook accessories, videoconferencing equipment, and network tools. Top sellers, "blowout specials," and rebate forms are a click away from the home page.

neutronet.com

Neutron carries thousands of computer systems and peripherals from nearly 400 manufacturers and distributors. A handy toolbox offers easy access to best buys, help for first-time buyers, and a massive manufacturer directory.

newegg.com

You won't have to shell out big bucks or scramble for hardware at **NewEgg.com**. Peck at the site's listings of new products and top sellers, then take a crack at the specials. Order carefully—the 15 percent restocking fee might make you squawk.

www.notebooksuperstore.com

Devoted exclusively to portable computers, **Notebook-SuperStore.com** sells more than 100 different laptop models from nine manufacturers. You'll see technical details about each model, and a comparison tool helps you zero in on the best portable for you.

nxgen.com

Next Generation's Web site is densely packed with prebuilt computers and peripherals ranging from cables to graphics cards. The selection is huge, and the site provides full specs and plenty of details about each product.

1coolpc.com

A cool computer is a happy computer. **1CoolPC** specializes in fans, heat sinks, and other cooling devices for your CPU, graphics card, monitor, hard drive, and other components that tend to swelter.

palmgear.com

Users of handhelds will appreciate the extensive selection of free and commercial programs downloadable from **PalmGear.com.** Shoppers can buy PDA hardware and accessories, including carrying cases and hip styli. Sign up for an e-mailing list to receive information about new software, news, and user tips.

pcconnection.com

PC Connection offers bargains on a colossal variety of PC and Macintosh products. Smart Selectors ease the search process for those looking for turnkey systems, cameras, printers, monitors, or memory to fit specific guidelines.

Batteries and Power

batteriesdirect.com

Empower yourself! **BatteriesDirect** sells batteries for laptops, camcorders, and portable phones, as well as AC adapters for portable computers. If the kids' toys are running on empty, check out the selection of rechargeable nickel metal-hydride batteries in sizes ranging from AAA to D.

www.batterybarn.com

Battery Barn's selection is more shocking than licking a fresh 9-volt. Here you'll find replacement batteries for your watch, electric shaver, radio-controlled toys, and cordless drill. Your gizmos will never be lifeless again.

buyuptime.com

BuyUptime.com's protection and security inventory includes uninterruptible power supplies and accessories, batteries, and power-distribution units. The selection ranges from simple surge protectors to industrial transformers.

ebatts.com

eBatts.com specializes in batteries for laptops, uninterruptible power supplies, camcorders, and cellular and cordless phones. Check out the battery-tips area for info about battery life, maximizing performance, and recycling old batteries.

planetbattery.com

Just choose the make and model of your drained device, and **PlanetBattery.com,** another plentiful source for replacement batteries, will show you what you need. The selection includes batteries for digital cameras, phones, laptops, and UPSs.

powersupersite.com

Need to be on the safe side? **Power SuperSite** offers new, used, and refurbished UPSs—search them by type, price, or power output. The site also sells surge protectors and replacement UPS batteries.

rbrc.org

When the batteries that power your mobile gadgets die, don't throw them out—recycle, recycle, recycle! **Rechargeable Battery Recycling** is a nonprofit organization that (surprise!) promotes the recycling of rechargeable batteries. The site will give you the address of local businesses where you can drop off used batteries and offers helpful tips for consumers on using rechargeable batteries.

SITE REVIEWS

www.pcliquidator.com

The getting's good at **PC Liquidator,** a site that offers clearance, refurbished, and overstocked hardware and software. The inventory is always changing and usually inexpensive. You can find many hardware choices for under $10—and software for 99 cents.

pcmall.com

Shoppers at **PC Mall** receive free lifetime technical support on the site's vast selection of computers, hardware, and software. The site's business-solutions forum offers corporate leasing and volume pricing. Apple-heads can find all their favorite Macintosh products at the **Mac Mall** sister site ***(www.macmall.com)***.

pcnation.com

You'll pledge allegiance to **PCNation** after seeing its catalog of 70,000 hardware, software, and networking products. The home page offers links to "best buys" and to products with special rebates.

pczone.com

PC Zone stocks an impressive selection of all things PC. You'll find links to a clearance area and other stores: **Mac Zone** and **Electronics Zone.** Printable rebate coupons can save you some cash.

provantage.com

Provantage offers PC products from more than 1,000 manufacturers, including a large selection of books and training materials. The site's Personal Tracking List feature lets customers build a list of product bookmarks, then monitor prices and availability.

Sunway Graphics

www.sg3d.com

Sunway Graphics specializes in PC graphics cards, offering a wide selection of powerful 3D accelerators. You'll also see a smaller selection of other graphics products: TV-tuner cards, videoconferencing equipment, and video-capture cards.

shopper.cnet.com

The **CNET Shopper** search engine takes the guesswork out of finding a deal on hardware, software, and accessories. The price-drop-alerts feature will send you e-mail when the cost of a coveted gadget falls. (CNET Networks is *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

sparco.com

Looking for that something extra? Check out **Sparco.com's** list of products that come bundled with "free stuff." The site stocks more than 130,000 products, and it offers a list of discounted items for students and faculty members of academic institutions.

ssdonline.com

At **State Street Direct,** shoppers will discover a huge selection of computers and imaging products. Digital-camera shoppers will find many items of interest, including customized comparison charts.

staples.com

Yeah, they've got that. **Staples'** Web site offers a liberal price-matching policy on computer accessories, software, and office supplies. If you order similar items often, you can set up personalized shopping lists. The company can occasionally take its time shipping items out to you, though, so beware.

superwarehouse.com

SuperWarehouse.com stocks printers, monitors, hard drives, scanners, digital cameras, and laptops. The site's selection of printers is particularly large, and even includes plotters, dot matrix units, and other special-use printers.

tccomputers.com

In business since 1988, **TC Computers** sells fully configured systems, motherboards, and peripherals. The company's specialty is motherboards; buyers can choose to have motherboards and processors preassembled and tested without paying extra.

tcwo.com

Thompson's Computer Warehouse Outlet offers only a small selection of computer products. You may find only a dozen monitors or four CD-ROM drives, but the prices are fantastic.

techstore.com

TechStore.com offers hardware in dozens of categories and highlights monthly top sellers. The site also sells software, ranging from productivity suites to children's titles.

thenerds.net

With no misgivings about the tech-savvy of its company or customers, **TheNerds.net** offers 60,000 computer products, ranging from cables and connectors to graphics cards, at its fast and friendly site. The liberal 30-day return policy will protect you from getting stuck with the wrong product.

tigerdirect.com

TigerDirect's site offers 40,000 products, including computers from Compaq, Gateway, and IBM. Up for a little adventure? Order a build-it-yourself custom PC kit, and let the fun begin!

triocomputers.com

TrioComputers.com offers an impressive array of computer accessories and configure-your-own PCs. Read the site's 10-step tutorial on building your own PC to see if you're up to the challenge.

True Data Technology

truedataonline.com

True Data Technology stocks an exceptional catalog of motherboards, hard drives, and other upgrades. The site also features communication essentials for businesses, including DSL equipment and telephony products.

warehouse.com

The four "warehouses" under **MicroWarehouse's** roof sell PC hardware, Mac products, datacomm components, and supplies. The site accepts corporate, educational, and government accounts, and offers business leases on several of its products.

<Direct PC Vendors

www.alienware.com

Alienware can build you a gamer's dream machine, high-performance workstation, or desktop video system. Cases are available in a rainbow of out-of-this-world colors.

buyabs.com

Exceptional customer support on custom-configured desktop and notebook systems is the goal at **ABS Computer Technologies.** All systems include a 30-day money-back guarantee. Some units are available with Linux preinstalled.

buy-atlas.com

Atlas Micro offers desktop PCs built around Pentium, Celeron, and AMD processors. Buyers can use drop-down menus to create a custom configuration and are protected by a reasonable 30-day return policy.

SITE REVIEWS

compaq.com

Three arms of **Compaq Computer's** site offer computers for everyone. See the Compaq AtHome division ***(athome.compaq.com)*** for home and home-office systems, DirectPlus ***(www.directplus.compaq.com)*** for business PCs and servers, or the Compaq Factory Outlet Superstore ***(www.compaqfactoryoutlet.com)*** for big bargains.

csd.toshiba.com

The Web home for **Toshiba's** stylish portables and desktop systems doesn't offer as many build-to-order options as some other sites, but it's loaded with plenty of extended-warranty and lease options.

cyberpowerinc.com

Each **CyberPower** PC includes a three-year warranty and 30-day money-back guarantee. The site's service area includes downloadable drivers and lifetime tech support.

dell.com

Dell Computer's electronic storefront has always led the way in ease of use. The site is jam-packed with detailed information that makes it a snap to match a machine to your needs. Each system is configurable to the nth degree via drop-down menus, and you can get quick access to online support customized for your PC.

www.fujitsu-pc.com

Fujitsu's site focuses on portable computing, including notebook PCs and pen-based tablet computers. Each computer includes several warranty options. A trade-in program offers cash back on your old computer when you upgrade to certain models.

gateway.com

One of the biggest players in online computer sales, **Gateway** has an enormous and informative site that sells custom-built desktops and portables, delivering them on time 98 percent of the time, according to BizRate.com.

hpshopping.com

At this site, **Hewlett-Packard** sells its lines of desktop and notebook computers, handhelds, PDAs, digital cameras, scanners, and printers. The site makes repeat purchases simple for businesses and individuals.

ibm.com/products

ShopIBM sells business and home PCs, notebooks, servers, thin clients, networking equipment, and peripherals. The build-to-order option allows buyers to customize a new desktop. Linux is an option on laptop models.

ShopIBM

idot.com

From low-cost budget models to powerful monster machines, **iDot** offers customized desktop and notebook computers with a good return policy.

microexpress.net

Micro Express offers built-to-order desktop and notebook computers featuring AMD and Intel processors. Each system includes a 30-day guarantee and a two- or four-year warranty. Business leases are available.

micronpc.com

One of the largest direct PC vendors, **MicronPC** sells computers to home-office users, larger businesses, government buyers, and buyers outside the United

Sites for Gamers

crazytree.com

From Dreamcast to Xbox, **CrazyTree.com** has low prices and flat-rate FedEx shipping for the console and PC games you dream about. There's plenty of information about Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) ratings, so you can choose games appropriate for the youngsters.

dragon.ca

Next time you get an itchy trigger finger, visit **Dragon.ca.** The site sells a gaggle of games for the PC and for video-game consoles. Although the games are in Canada, prices are quoted in both U.S. and Canadian dollars, and shipping is very affordable.

ebgames.com

EBgames.com is a game player's paradise, selling new and preowned titles for PCs and every game console under the sun. The site's new EB1 service lets users with broadband Internet access rent PC games online.

gamespot.com

GameSpot's news, previews, and player guides are sure to hit the spot. Download game demos to try something new, then find the best prices with the site's Game Buyer feature. (GameSpot is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

gamestop.com

GameStop.com is an elegant site that offers new and used games for consoles and for your PC. A "build your own bundle" feature makes it easy to piece together your dream system, complete with console, accessories, and games.

tronixweb.com

Do you crave games you just can't get in the United States? In addition to domestic titles, **Tronix** sells Japanese-import software, hardware, and accessories for your favorite video-game consoles.

videogamewarehouse.com

Video Game Warehouse only sells used console video games—perfect when you're looking for last year's game or are shopping on a budget. The site stocks titles for older systems too, including the original PlayStation and Super Nintendo. They'll even buy back your previously played games at competitive prices.

etronics.com

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The Internet's Electronics Superstore

www.etronics.com

Call us toll-free: 800-585-6097

Many reasons to log onto the Internet's most advanced electronics site...

- **360° product views.**
- **Real-time, on-line order tracking.**
- **30-day Satisfaction Guarantee.**
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- **Comprehensive information on every product...**

• Check out these and thousands of other great products when you log on at www.etronics.com. And if you decide to purchase, we'll show our appreciation by giving you a free gift with every order over $50.

To receive your free gift, enter code # CSMAG at checkout.

TOSHIBA TLP-X10
Video to XGA 2000 Ansi Lumen LCD Projector

TLP-X10 features High brightness design allows use at any time during the day. Compact and lightweight body gives you ultra-portability, Icon based menu for ease of operation.

CANON CANOSCAN FS-2710
2720 dpi 35mm/APS Film Scanner

The CanoScan FS2710 scans up to 2,720 dpi, making it powerful enough to satisfy even the most demanding applications, 36-bit scanning capability supports recognition of 68.7 billion colors, so the resulting digital scans are accurate down to the minutest detail.

JVC HR-DVS2U Mini DV/S-VHS Dual Deck

Dual deck VCR incorporates the two most popular prosumer formats together in one unit, providing a complete high-performance solution for editing DV projects, mastering to S-VHS, or dubbing to or from either format. Easy integration with most NLE systems. Convenient built-in editing features include automatic editing from DV to Super VHS/VHS, plus outstanding picture quality, PCM digital audio, and robust tape transport mechanism. Now you can easily record and copy from DV to VHS/SVHS and visa versa.

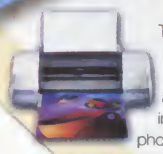
SONY DAV-S500 DVD/Home Theater System

DVD/CD/SACD/receiver six speaker system, 280 watts total system power (3 ohms, 120 - 10 kHz, 10% THD), 2-Way Front speakers with 2-3/8" woofers, Center and Surround speakers with 2-3/8" full-range drivers, Subwoofer with 7" driver
Dolby Digital, dts and Dolby Pro Logic decoding
Digital Cinema Sound system recreates the acoustics of Hollywood dubbing stages, Headphone Theater mode, space-saving full digital amplifier

SONY MHC-RG70AV Mini Hi-Fi Component System

Features 3-disc CD changer with Play Exchange, Dolby Pro Logic decoding, Dual auto reverse deck w/ full logic controls, Hybrid Dual Woofer main speakers. 240 watts of total system power, Five-speaker system with Center and Surround, Game Sync front A/V inputs for videogame console or VHS, Subwoofer output, Remote Commander remote control

EPSON Stylus Photo 1280
Inkjet Printer



The Epson Stylus Photo 1280 ink-jet printer offers stunning 2,880 x 720 dpi resolution and a quick-drying six-color ink palette to produce large photo prints in crisp detail and true tonal quality.

SONY DCR-PC110 DV Camcorder

The unique combination of a Sony Megapixel (1,070,000 Pixels) CCD and a Carl Zeiss Lens deliver the best available image quality for moving and still images - housed in one of the world's most compact camcorders. 520 lines of horizontal resolution deliver precision video footage with brilliant color reproduction and excellent digital zoom results

SONY NW-MS9 Digital Music Player

Sony NW-MSA9 Memory Stick Walkman: Removable 64MB MagicGate™ Memory Stick Media Provides Up to 120 Minutes of Music Enjoyment. Transfer Internet Downloads and Recordings from Your CDs to and from PC. Connects to USB Port for High Speed Data Transfe, Connects to USB Port for High Speed Data Transfer, Skip-Proof Design -- No Moving Parts. Plays Back in ATRAC3, Supports MP3, WMA, WAV and Liquid Audio. Upgradeable to Support Additional Audio Formats

GARMIN ETREX VISTA
GPS Handheld

The eTrex Vista combines a basemap of North and South America, with a barometric altimeter and electronic compass. The compass provides bearing information while you're standing still and the altimeter determines your precise altitude.

SONY D-EJ925
Portable CD Player

Tiny, tough, and loaded with sophisticated CD playback electronics / Great for travel, workouts, or any listening situation
If he were still living, actor/hoofer James Cagney would be the no-brainer choice as spokesperson for the Sony D-EJ925 CD portable

SONY MZ-R900DPC MD WALKMAN
Mini Disc Player/Recorder PC Bundle

Includes Digital PCLink for Recording Your Favorite Music Files from the Intertnet, Automatic Synchronized Recording, Automatic Trackmark Insertion, MD-LP (Long Time Stereo Recording and Playback), "AA" Type NC-14WM Rechargeable Battery Included, World's Longest Recording Time with up to 66 hours playback and 30 hours of recording time

PANASONIC DMR-E20S
Next Generation DVD Recorder

DMR-E20 a Next-Generation Video Recorder can record on both DVD-RAM discs and DVD-R discs. Capable of high-speed data transmission and high-speed random access, this recorder offers countless recording and playback possibilities. Along with easy operation and the storage convenience of disc.

PALM M505
Handheld Palmpilot

Features Flexible Storage Capacity(8MB), Expansion Card and Slot, Color Screen, Universal Connector, Various Palm classic functions, Add storage, back-up, content, and software in Secure Digital and MultiMediaCard formats.

PANASONIC KX-TG2000B
2 Line Phone System

Panasonic's new KX-TG2000B 2.4GHz multi-handset cordless phone systems combine the advantages of a business-style telephone system with the convenience and mobility of 2.4GHz cordless operation. 94-Channel Frequency Hopping, Accommodates up to 8 Cordless Handset Stations All-Digital Voice Mail System with Automated Attendant

Nikon COOLPIX 885
3.21 million effective pixels to produce ultrahigh-definition 2,048 x 1,536-pixel images

Compact and lightweight, with a style that looks as good as the pictures it takes, the COOLPIX 885 is always ready for that important moment. The ergonomic, easy-to-grip body fits snugly in the hand, with easy access to all controls. The COOLPIX 885's TRANSFER button enables one-touch upload to the web* via the USB cable, automatically transferring all selected pictures in the COOLPIX 885 straight to the web or directly to your computer.

MINOLTA DIMAGE 7
5.2 Megapixels Digital Camera and 2/3 inch CCD

The DiMAGE 7 has a high power 7x optical zoom lens that has the flexibility to shoot wide-angle landscapes to intimate portraits using the telephoto setting. The DiMAGE 7's zoom range is equivalent to a 28mm to 200mm lens in 35mm format. Super High Image Quality, 5.2 Megapixels, 2/3 inch CCD, Optical 7x Zoom Lens with 28mm Wide Angle Coverage (equivalent to 28 – 200mm in the 35mm film format), Digital Hyper EVF.

SITE REVIEWS

States. The Factory Outlet offers refurbished and discontinued systems.

www.mwmicro.com

Go MidWest, young man. **MidWest Micro** delivers down-home, custom-configured desktops, servers, and notebook systems. The site's Service Center is exemplary, with a troubleshooting knowledge base and driver downloads that cater to your particular system.

nutrend.com

Custom-configure a home or business desktop PC at **NuTrend Computer Products.** The company stocks machines running your choice of Intel or AMD processors. Each system comes with a three-year warranty.

www.polywell.com/onlinestore

Polywell Computers may not be a household name, but the company offers desktops, workstations, and servers that are worth a look. You'll find massive custom-configuration options.

sagernotebook.com

Specializing in notebook computers, **Sager** offers a variety of options, from budget machines to speedy multimedia units. Service includes a 72-hour repair-turnaround guarantee and lifetime free tech support. Business leases are available.

shopprostar.com

Each computer in **ProStar Computer's** line of notebook PCs is backed by a 30-day money-back guarantee, a speedy-repair promise, and free tech support. The handy comparison tool helps buyers zero in on the best model.

sonystyle.com/vaio

SonyStyle is a sleek-looking site selling Sony's line of VAIO desktops and notebooks, plus digital cameras, displays, and storage devices.

store.apple.com

Apple Computer's well-designed site allows you to custom-configure any Macintosh computer and offers a wide array of Mac-compatible software and accessories. Beware the one-click ordering feature, however—using it may be a bit too convenient for impulse buyers!

unitedmicro.com

Take home a preconfigured Intel- or AMD-based PC, or start with a bare-bones system and let **United Micro** install the components of your choice.

www.winbook.com

Focusing exclusively on portables, **WinBook Computer** offers machines with a 30-day money-back guarantee, a one-year warranty, and free technical support. Ironically, some of the site's best deals, the daily "Web specials," can only be ordered by phone.

<PC Resources

consumerreview.com

ConsumerReview.com helps consumers research products before they buy. The site provides more than 200,000 reviews and ratings for tech gadgets and products for the home, car, and kids.

dcresource.com

The **Digital Camera Resource Page** is an unbiased, comprehensive source of information for digital-camera buyers and owners. Shoppers can glean necessary info from the FAQ page, buyer's guide, message boards, and reviews.

dealnews.com

Deal yourself in! **Dealnews** is a fantastic buyer's guide that reports on low-price specials in Web stores. Updated daily, the site discovers deals that range from tempting to nearly impossible to resist. Check out sister site **Dealmac** for Mac-oriented gotta-haves.

dealtime.com

DealTime.com is an independent comparison-shopping service. The site aggregates prices from hundreds of online merchants, auctions, and classified sites. Also, 21st-century shoppers can compare prices by cell phone or wireless PDA, thanks to the site's mobile service.

56k.com

See **56K.com** for a primer on 56kbps modems, a price shopper for buying a modem at the best price, and downloads of the latest firmware. Read the special report on the new V.92 modems.

gomez.com

Gómez.com offers ratings and customer reviews of e-commerce sites in two dozen categories, ranging from Web-based computer stores to drugstores, apparel vendors to online brokers. Check the ratings on ease of use, customer confidence, and cost.

hardwarereincarnation.com

Let your laptop live again! **Hardware Reincarnation** is a guide to repairing and upgrading laptop computers. The site includes a database of LCD screens—find out which laptops' displays are compatible. You'll also find upgrade tips and a guide to laptop repair.

www.linhardware.com

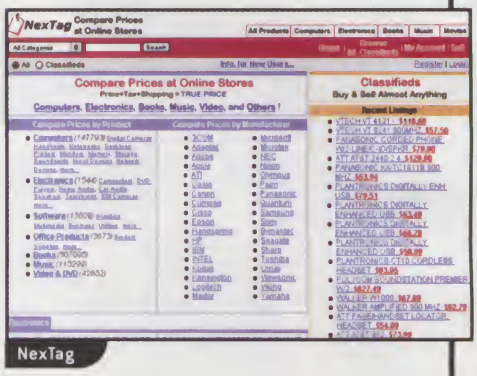
Will that sleek new laptop run Linux? Find out with the **ZDNet Linux Hardware Database,** where users share their experiences regarding which hardware's compatible with Linux—and which isn't. For the stuff that is, download the appropriate driver and put it to work. (ZDNet is owned by CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company.)

motherboards.org

Motherboards.org is packed with motherboard news, reviews, specifications, and tips. Its comprehensive database of 1,400 products includes driver information, technical details, and overclocking hints.

nextag.com

NexTag is a sophisticated buying service that can help frugal shoppers find the lowest possible prices on computer equipment, electronics, books, music, and videos. Entering your ZIP code allows NexTag to calculate shipping and tax for accurate pricing.



NexTag

pdastreet.com

No matter which PDA you use, there's something for you at **PDAStreet.com.** This multifaceted site delivers reviews, software downloads, user tips, and classified ads for Windows CE, Palm, Visor, Psion, and RIM users.

resellerratings.com

Want a second opinion before you share your credit-card number with an unfamiliar online merchant? Check **ResellerRatings.com,** which provides customer evaluations of 1,900 online hardware vendors. Take reviews with a grain of salt: We've seen dozens of negative messages posted by one (very unhappy) person.

<Software Sites

beyond.com

Beyond.com presents software for PC, Mac, and PDA users. In addition to traditional boxed titles, the site sells downloadable software from major publishers and a respectable selection of computer hardware. (CNET Networks, *Computer Shopper's* parent company, is an investor in Beyond.com.)

buypcsoft.com

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cameraworld.com

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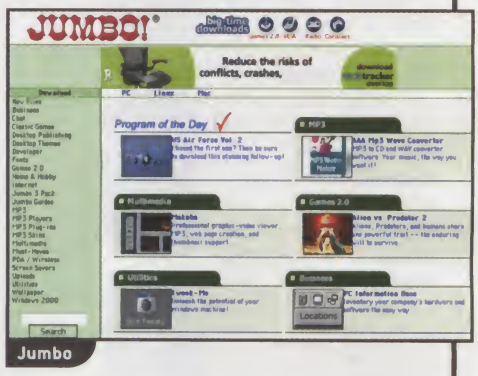

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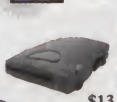

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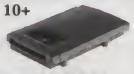
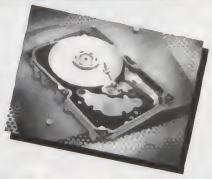


Internal SCSI [JAZ2I]	$235
External SCSI [JAZ2X]	$299
Jaz 1 GB media [JAZ1GIGPC] 2-5/5-9/10+	$80/77/75
Jaz 2 GB media [JAZ2GIGPC] 2-5/5-9/10+	$85/80/77

ULTRA/160 SCSI HARD DRIVES

Seagate



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Capacity	Buffer	Speed	Part Number	Int.	Ext.
9.2GB	4MB	10,000	ST39205LW	$175	$305
18.4GB	2MB	7200	ST318437LW	$175	$305
18.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST318405LW	$205	$335
18.4GB	4MB	15,000	ST318452LW	$329	$459
36.7GB	2MB	7200	ST336737LW	$319	$449
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	ST336705LW	$399	$529
36.7GB	4MB	15,000	ST336752LW	$559	$689
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST373405LW	$769	$899
181.6GB	4MB	7200	ST1181677LW	$1419	$1549
181.6GB	16MB	7200	ST1181677LWV	$1469	$1599

Maxtor

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18.4GB	4MB	7200	XC318400LW	$175	$305
18.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW018L2	$209	$339
36.7GB	4MB	7200	XC336700LW	$325	$455
36.7GB	8MB	10,000	KW036L4	$419	$549
73.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW073L8	$785	$915

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18.3GB	4MB	10,000	07N6350	$279
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	07N6340	$465
73.4GB	4mb	10,000	07N6300	$839

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IDE 66 with metal cartridge (DP2200AM66)	$87	$96
ULTRA WIDE SCSI (DP2200UW)	$105	N/A
EXTRA CARTRIDGE		
Plastic IDE 66 (DPACART66)	$42	N/A
Metal IDE 66 (DPACARTM66)	$50	$60
ULTRA WIDE SCSI (DPUWCART)	$61	N/A
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ULTRA WIDE SCSI (DPUWFRAMEA)	$51	

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MicroVIDEO DV200 FireWire Editing Kit	(210100094)	$259
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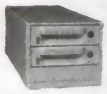
72GB	4	18B/10,000rpm	ARR72-10EX	$1959
90GB	5	18GB/7200rpm	ARR90-7EX	$2679
144GB	4	36GB/10,000rpm	ARR144-10EX	$3039
216GB	6	36GB/7200rpm	ARR216-7EX6	$4279
252GB	7	36GB/10,000rpm	ARR252-10EX	$5219

• SCSI RAID-READY Drive Enclosures w/DataPorts •

# DataPorts	Interface	Item No.	Price
2	Ultra2 SCSI	FHCASEUSW	$549
4	UltraWide SCSI	DUALCASEUSW	$659
8	Ultra2 SCSI	QUADCASE8U2	$1179

• *RAID Suitable Enclosures* •



2 Drive Desktop Model (FHCASEUSW) $549

4 Drive Desktop Model (DUALCASEUSW) $659

These hard drive enclosures are perfect for RAID or multiple drive applications. They feature hot swapable drive shuttles, and large cooling fans. These cases use a special backplane technology that allows you to use Wide SCSI, Ultra Wide SCSI, or Ultra-2 LVD hard drives without the normal cable length problems. Add drives and an Adaptec RAID controller for your complete high-end RAID solution. We are the Number One source for RAID in the US. Call our experts and let us configure one for you.

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Brand	Model	Max Spin	Speed	Internal	External
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NEC	CDR3010	40X	85ms	$67	$127
Plextor	PX40TS(tray)	40X	85ms	$87	$147

• WIDE SCSI CD ROM Drives •

Plextor	PX40TSUW	40X	85ms	$99	$189

• Atapi CD ROM Drives (IDE) •

					Parallel Port
Teac	CD540E	40X	85ms	$43	$98
Mitsumi	CRMCFX48X	48X	65ms	$39	$95
Creative	SBCD52	52X	100ms	$37	$95
Sony	CDU5211	52X	85ms	$39	$95
Acer	CD656A	56X	85ms	$39	$95

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48x drive speed, 8 drive tower.	(MIT48X8N)	$1295

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Teac 16x10x40 IDE	(CDW516EKIT)	$135
Acer 16x10x40 IDE	(ARCRW1610A)	$140
Sony 16x10x40 IDE	(CRX168B/A1)	$149
TDK 16x10x40 IDE	(ACDRW161040)	$185
Hewlett Packard 16x10x40 IDE	(C9627A)	$155
Plextor 16x10x40 IDE	(PXW1610TAR)	$189
Yamaha 20x10x40 IDE	(CRW2200EZ)	$229
TDK 24x10x40 IDE	(A1-241040)	$239
Plextor 24x10x40 IDE	(PXW2410TAR)	$245

• SCSI CD Rewriters •

Plextor 12x10x32 SCSI Int/Ext Bare	(PXW1210TSB/X)	$225/ $285
Yamaha 16x10x40 SCSI Int/Ext Bare	(YCRW2100S/X)	$189/ $249
Yamaha 20x10x40 SCSI Int/Ext Bare	(YCRW2200S/X)	$239/ $299

• USB and 1394 CD Rewriters •

Hewlett Packard 4x4x6 USB	(C4540A)	$165
Teac 4x4x6 USB	(CDW54EUSB)	$165
Sony 12x8x32 1394	(CRX1600L/A2)	$225
FireWire 16x10x40 (w/ Plextor Drive)	(FW16X10X40P)	$299
Yamaha 20x10x40 1394	(CRW2200FXZ)	$319

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12x	Platinum 5/20/50/100 pack	$6/$24/$57/$106
Printable CDR-74 in jewel case		
16x	Budget 5/20/50/100 pack	$4/$15/$35/$66
16x	Standard 5/20/50/100 pack	$7/$26/$62/$115
CDR-80 80 minute media		
24x	Budget 5/20/50/100 pack	$4/$13/$32/$59

• CD REWRITABLE MEDIA •

CDR-74W in jewel case		
4x	Budget 5/20/50/100 pack	$6/$24/$56/$104
4x	Standard 5/20/50/100 pack	$9/$35/$79/$159
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Bare	Interface	CD Speed	DVD Speed	Part #	Price
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Pioneer	IDE (slot)	40X/80ms	16X,110ms	DVD106	$69
Pioneer	SCSI	40X/90ms	10X,120ms	DVD305	$99

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Bare	Interface	CD Speed	DVD Speed	Part #	Price
Toshiba	IDE	48X/95ms	16X/115ms	SDM1502	$65
Toshiba	SCSI	40X/85ms	10X/105ms	SDM1401	$119

Complete DVD Kits

MegaHaus 16X Drive Kit [DVD16KIT] $125
Creative Encore 12X DVD Drive Kit [CLDVD12KIT] $135
Hollywood MPEG-2 Decoder [HOLLYWOOD] $55
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LTO Viper Ultra2 SCSI Bare Internal Tape Drive (STU42001LWS) $ 5015
LTO Viper Ultra2 SCSI Internal Tape Drive Kit (STU42001LWK) $ 5129
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A22M-R1U	Pentium® III 850	15 TFT	64/20/DVD/56k	1699.99
A22M-S1U	Pentium® III 900	15 TFT	64/20/DVD/56k	1799.99
A22M-T1U	Pentium® III 1000	14.1 TFT	128/30/DVD/56k	1899.99
A22P-U1U	Pentium® III 1000	15 TFT	128/30/CD-RW/56k	CALL
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T22-5CU	Pentium® III 1000	14.1 SXGA	128/32/DVD/56k	2499.99
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1300i-7WU	Celeron® 700	13.3 TFT	64/10/24X/56k	1099.99
1300i-8MU	Pentium® III 750	13.3 TFT	64/20/CD-RW/56k	1349.99
1300i-9MU	Pentium® III 750	13.3 TFT	64/20/CD-RW/56k	1449.99
THINKPAD T22A-27U				
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X21-61U	Pentium® III 700	12.1 TFT	128/20/OPT/56k	2099.99
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TRAVELMATE 212T				
TRAVELMATE				
210TER	Celeron® 700	13.3 TFT	64/10/CD-RW/56k	1249.99
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FX250	Pentium® III 800	15 TFT	128/20/DVD-CDRW/56k	1799.99
FX270	Pentium® III 850	15 TFT	192/20/DVD-CDRW/56k	1999.99
PCG-FX290				
WINDOWS® 2000 MODELS				
FX220K	Pentium® III 750	15 TFT	128/15/DVD/56k	1549.99
FX240K	Pentium® III 800	14.1 TFT	128/15/DVD/56k	1699.99
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Model	Processor	Display	Ram/HD/CD/Mod	Price
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R505TEK	Pentium® III 750	12.1 TFT	128/15/Opt/56k/W2K	1899.99
R505TSK	Pentium® III 850	12.1 TFT	128/20/Opt/56k/W2K	2349.99
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VAIO PCG-GR150K				
PCG-SR27K	Pentium® III 750	10.4 TFT	128/30/Win ME	1849.99
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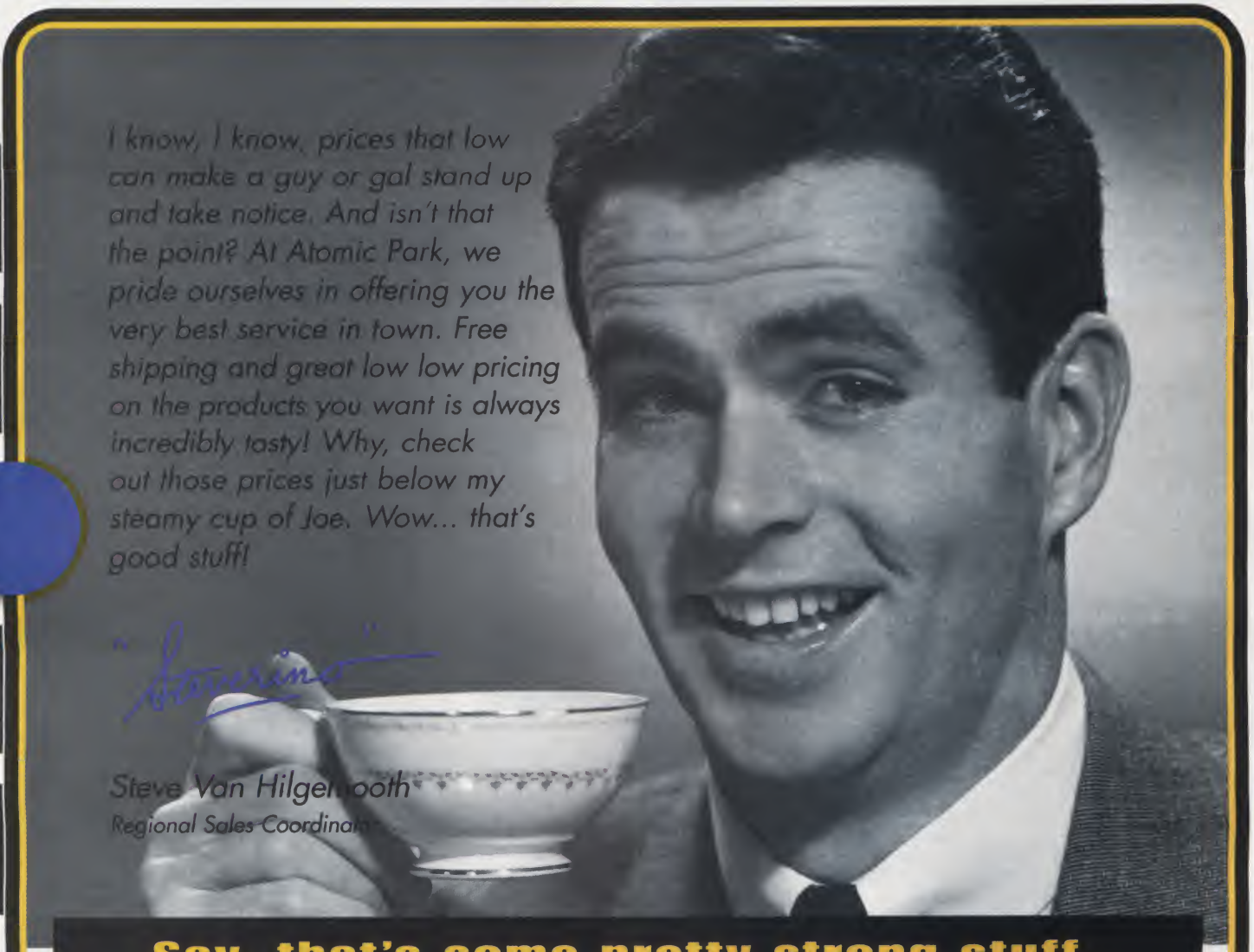

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Business Buyer

New VAIO Line Means Business

Sony Electronics has launched two initiatives aimed at gaining a foothold in the business market: It has expanded its reseller channel to make it easier for corporate customers to buy its VAIO notebooks and introduced two new models designed specifically for corporate customers.

Sony VAIO GR170K

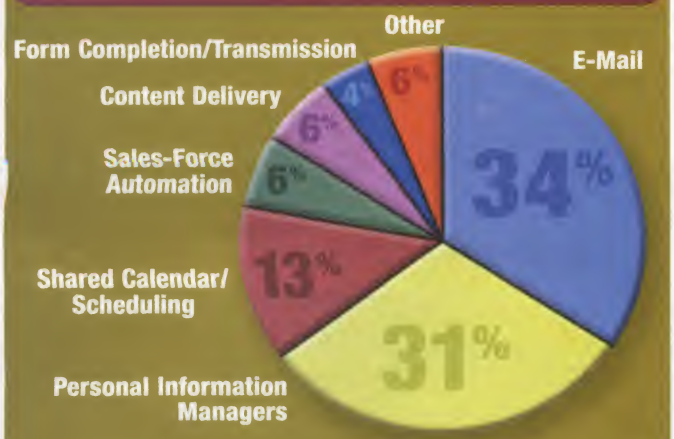
To reach this market, Sony has appointed **Tech Data** as its first commercial VAIO distributor. Through Tech Data, Sony can reach thousands of value-added resellers (VARs) and systems integrators, according to John Gawa, commercial marketing manager for VAIO. "This is a first in VAIO's five-year history," he says. Before now, corporate customers had to buy the PCs through retail channels, direct marketing resellers (DMRs), mail order, or *www.sonystyle.com*.

"We've had excellent penetration into the SOHO and SMB [small and medium business] markets," says Gawa. "What's been missing are the tens of thousands of resellers who get their products from distributors, the two largest being Tech Data and Ingram Micro. We want to make sure our products are available through all the channels our customers want to buy them through."

Sony believes its new GR series notebook will appeal to corporate types. "The GR series is our first line of notebooks designed for business," says Chris Pollitt, director of notebook marketing. The two new portables, the GR170K and the GR150K, are two-spindle models powered by Intel's new Mobile Intel Pentium III Processor-M. "This new chip runs cooler and faster, allows notebooks to break the 1GB barrier, and offers longer battery life," says Pollitt.

The GRs are 1.4 inches thick, weigh 5.6 pounds with one battery and 6.3 pounds with the removable DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive, and feature a 14.1-inch screen. They also incorporate VAIO's i.Link (IEEE 1394/FireWire) digital interface, which enables the connection of digital-video peripherals such as digital camcorders. —*Nancy A. Lang*

Top Apps Among Mobile Workers



Almost half of all organizations employ wireless data communications on handhelds, notebooks, and interactive pagers to support mobile workers, according to a survey by Mobile Insights. Not surprisingly, e-mail is the most popular app, but personal information management is a very close second.

SOURCE: MOBILE INSIGHTS

What's Behind the Pop-Under?

As Internet advertisers struggle to find a model that works, the latest technique, the pop-under ad, continues to come under attack. Saying pop-unders are at best annoying and at worst downright devious, consumers are complaining vehemently about the ads.

As their name implies, pop-unders open beneath the site from which they originate. Depending on the sites you visit, the same ad can appear several times a day.

Although Jupiter Media Metrix analyst Rudy Grahn is convinced pop-under ads have a negative effect on the brands they tout, he sees an irony in consumer resistance. "The truth is, they are a little less intrusive," he says. "But the frequency is the problem."

It's the frequency that makes them attractive to advertisers, however. Pop-unders often run on a pay-per-performance basis, says Grahn, meaning you pay ad publishers only when you make a sale. The more frequently an ad appears, the better your chances of making a sale.

Small businesses should be especially cautious of employing pop-unders, says Grahn, because they're unlikely to generate enough impressions to make a pop-under profitable. "They could be a large source of negative brand perception, but not a large source of revenue," he says.

—*Donna Tapellini*

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Immediate purchasing plans

61% of Computer Shopper readers plan to buy software during the next 12 months.[3]

49% of our readers plan to buy desktop computers over the next 12 months.[3]

Active buyers: online and off

Our readers enjoy the ease and convenience of online shopping—**86%** of Computer Shopper readers looked online for products/services in the last 3 months.[2]

Big spenders

Our readers expect to spend **$340,215** in the next 12 months for computer products, exceeding the business influencer-market spending estimate of **$187,411!**[2]

Be sure you get to know the Computer Shopper reader. He's certain to be a close family friend, business associate or relative—and the active buyer of technology products and services that your company is looking for! An influential decision-maker and expert PC user*, the Computer Shopper reader is everywhere—small office, home office, and corporate headquarters—and he's always on the lookout for good product value and the best that today's technology has to offer. Get to know him better by making him your newest customer with your ad in Computer Shopper!

*Surpassing the readers of PC World, PC Magazine, Business 2.0 and Wired.[1]

Online and offline, Computer Shopper delivers the buyers that grow your business!

Call 800.999.7467 for more information.

COMPUTER SHOPPER
www.computershopper.com

ZDNet

Sources: (1) IntelliQuest CIMS, Business & Home Influencer Studies v.7.0 (2) IntelliQuest CIMS, Business Influencer Study v.7.0 (3) IntelliQuest CIMS, Home Influencer Study v.7.0 (4) MRI, Fall 2000

E-SERVICES AND TOOLS

Big Help For Small Business

BY DONNA TAPELLINI

Small companies can get corporate-size services with these online tools.

AS A SMALL-BUSINESS OWNER, YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE ACCESS TO the complex tools and expensive services larger corporations enjoy. But you can find services of every stripe on the Web—either free or low-cost—that can help you run your business like a miniaturized conglomerate. These sites will train fledgling CEOs, keep small-business owners informed, and provide useful services without breaking your budget.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU (WWW.CENSUS.GOV)

You can get the dope on demographics at the U.S. Census Bureau's official site. Planning to open a business in Hudson County, N.J.? Hit State and County QuickFacts, and you get a free compilation of population statistics, such as median household income. You'll also find various types of business data, including per capita retail sales .

You can also review the leading economic indicators for information on construction spending, monthly wholesale trade, new home sales, manufacturers' shipments, and inventories and orders. The E-Stats section measures the "electronic economy," with reports on retail e-commerce sales and other yardsticks. Download PDF files containing foreign-trade information, such as imports and exports by geographic area.

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (WWW.SBA.GOV)

Startups will find a variety of useful free services at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) site. Begin by clicking on Starting Your Business, which delivers state-by-state links to government sites covering information on worker's compensation, business licenses, and state tax laws.

The SBA also offers useful tutorials on topics such as writing a business plan. The business-plan tutorial offers a complete outline and a list of questions you need to ask yourself on topics such as management, marketing, and financial planning.

The site also links you to shareware programs for tasks such as creating bar codes, keeping time sheets, and generating forms. An online library hooks you up with pertinent government documents and the texts of laws and regulations such as the Small Business Investment Act.

The SBA's site gives you step-by-step instructions for writing an effective business plan.

SCORE's best feature is its e-mail counseling service, which puts you in touch with counselors specializing in your area of interest.

The SBA even doles out money in the form of various loans, and you can fill out many of the applications online. You'll find the forms under Financing Your Business; go to the Loan Forms section.

Access to the Angel Capital Electronic Network (ACE-Net), another branch of the SBA, is provided; entrepreneurs can list their companies here, after passing through a rigorous qualification procedure that includes consultation with legal counsel.

BRAINWAVE (WWW.BRAINWAVE.TELEBASE.COM)

Brainwave opens the door to a variety of useful databases. Dun & Bradstreet reports, trademark information, company profiles, and scientific data are all available in searchable form. The company compiles its information from sources as diverse as industry-specific newspapers, databases specializing in energy research, Standard & Poor's, and industry abstracts. You'll pay a fee for some reports. A Dun & Bradstreet company profile, for instance, costs $6. This is basically D&B's $25 Business Background Report, minus details on special events such as a fire at the premises, business history, and operations information. Other sources include Experian and Thomas Register.

ONECORE (WWW.ONECORE.COM)

This grouping of services lets you manage your company's financial matters from a single account. The site helps you set up credit-card-processing capabilities, manage a 401(k) program, perform payroll functions, and obtain various types of insurance at group rates. You can even pay your bills online through the site. Its Smart Alerts tools let you know when a merchant deposit has arrived and when your bills are due. Fees vary for each service. Bill payment, for example, costs $2.95 per month and 55 cents per bill.

SERVICE CORPS OF RETIRED EXECUTIVES (WWW.SCORE.ORG)

You'll find 11,000 specialists at your disposal at the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) *Web site. SCORE's best online* service is free e-mail counseling. Submit a preliminary question, and SCORE will automatically provide the names of counselors specializing in your area. Counselor skills range from the expected (accounting, Web-site design) to the unusual (agricultural economics, yarn spinning). Once the appropriate expert receives your query, SCORE promises an answer within 48 hours.

Even if you're already up and running, you can never have enough information if it helps you better understand your own business, your market, and competitors. These sites can make you smarter and your business more successful.

Get the Goods on Potential Partners

You don't need to plant hidden cameras or tap phone lines to investigate companies with which you intend to do business. The Web provides legal ways to learn about their operations and finances.

BY RICH CASTAGNA

A handshake may still be the honorable way to close a deal, but executing a few mouse clicks at some key Web sites before extending your hand is not only prudent, it's also good business. Before you buy materials, agree to provide services, or enter into a partnership, you should check out the fiscal health of the companies with which you're about to do business.

A little preliminary snooping can give you an insider's look at prospective partners, suppliers, and customers. Any information you dig up about a company's financial health, bill-paying history, and market share can help you determine whether it's wise to pursue the relationship. Before the advent of the Web, getting this kind of data entailed long hours at the library or waiting days—or even weeks—for reports to arrive in the mail. Today, outfits that for decades have specialized in providing background data on businesses offer the same information via the Web.

When researching a company, your main concern will be whether it is creditworthy. Finding out involves obtaining some of the following information:

- Company history, key personnel, and number of employees
- The type of business entity (whether it's a corporation, a partnership, or a sole proprietorship)
- Financial information for at least the previous year
- Bill-payment performance, including past delinquencies
- Name changes or changes in ownership
- Bankruptcies or other significant financial woes
- Whether the company is involved in litigation

You can always ask the company to supply much of this information, but it never hurts to get confirmation. And you may uncover some information the company itself won't reveal.

Getting the same information about your competitors is also important, as is searching for news and trend information, a process known as competitive intelligence (CI). For a listing of some CI resources, see the sidebar, "Sites for Sure Eyes."

Two of the top sources for specific company information are Dun & Bradstreet and Hoover's. Both have easy-to-use Web sites that let you peer into the innards of thousands of companies, public and private.

DUN & BRADSTREET

With data on more than 60 million companies worldwide, Dun & Bradstreet ***(www.dnb.com)*** lets you choose among a variety of reports ranging in price from $25 to $150. D&B also offers special services for small businesses, including a three-level subscription plan. The Basic subscription is free, and you pay $14.99 for each credit report. The $24.99-per-month Silver plan includes two free reports per month, with additional reports priced at $12.99. The $39.99 Gold subscription ups the number of free reports to four; additional reports are $12.99. Each subscription plan lets you store information on companies you're tracking: 15 with Basic, 75 with Silver, and 150 with Gold.

You begin by entering what you know about a company: its name and location, or its D&B D-U-N-S number. If the company is in the database—and odds are it will be—a confirmation will appear with its full name

and address, and any other names it may use. As a result, you can be reasonably certain D&B has the data you need before you commit to spending any money on a report.

D&B's most basic report is its Business Background Report (BBR). For $25 (payable online via credit card), you get the following information:

- The year the company was founded
- Latest annual sales
- The company's net worth
- Total number of employees
- Names of company executives

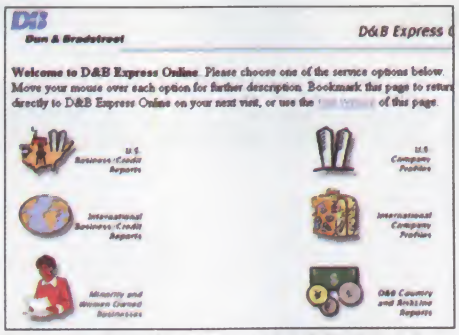
You'll also get a business history, a description of the company's operations, more detailed information on the backgrounds of key executives, and information about whether the company is affiliated with other businesses. If you need more data, select one of these reports:

- ***The Credit Scoring Report*** ($52) rates a company's creditworthiness by predicting the likelihood of it paying in a delinquent manner during the next 12 months. It also reveals a company's relative ranking among other businesses in the D&B database.
- ***The Payment Analysis Report*** ($66) provides some payment history and banking data.
- ***The Supplier Evaluation Report*** ($99) assigns a company a Supplier Risk Score, which rates the likelihood of it going belly-up before paying all creditors.
- ***The Comprehensive Report*** ($112) provides much of the information from the above reports with more detailed financial data.
- ***The Business Information Report*** ($95) is the ultimate fact finder, providing detailed information about company history and operations, as well as credit and other financial information.

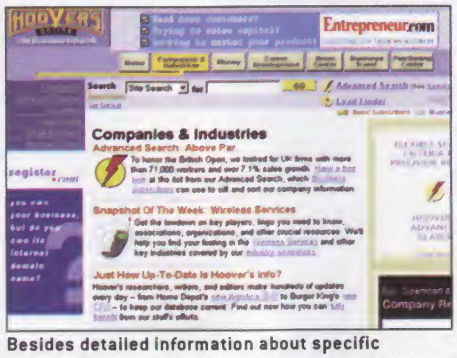
A handy matrix matches available reports with the type of information you're seeking. You can use it to view samples of all reports to better determine which ones you need. This broad range of information makes D&B a site worthy of a bookmark for any *small or medium-size* business.

HOOVER'S ONLINE

If you plan to conduct regular research on your partners and competitors, consider a subscription to Hoover's Online ***(www.hooversonline.com)***. A business subscription gives you access to in-depth data on private and public companies, including financial information, background on the officers, historical information, related news stories, and the number of employees, including the rate at which the staff is growing. Prices range from $1,750 per year for five seats to $45,000 per year for 1,000 seats. For an exact quote you have to contact Hoover's, a process you can initiate at the site.



No subscription is needed to use Dun & Bradstreet's Web site—you can order many company reports online.



Besides detailed information about specific companies, Hoover's also offers industry data and a business-news service.

Hoover's can also tell you how much money a company made in its previous fiscal year and how it made that money. Figures include net income and the rate of income growth. You can even view a list of competitors to see how the company fits into its marketplace. Financial information includes quarterly and annual results, and gets very detailed. In addition, the site provides access to a company's annual report and documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Hoover's is also a clearinghouse of useful third-party information. CourtLink's CaseStream service, for instance, notifies you via e-mail of every newly filed federal case and some state cases. This alerts you immediately if your business partners, competitors, customers, or even your own company is being sued. Hoover's also offers links to the publication library from Factiva, a service run jointly by Dow Jones and Reuters. Search for articles in more than 6,000 publications by keyword, company name, or ticker symbol; you're charged only for the articles you read.

OTHER SITES

D&B and Hoover's are the biggies in the company-information business, but other sources offer similar, or in some cases identical, information. FreeEdgar ***(www.freeedgar.com)***, a service of the SEC, gives you the goods on public companies for free. Broker and analyst reports are available for a relatively modest fee. A number of credit-checking organizations, such as CreditFYI ***(www.creditfyi.com)***, have online facilities that will do a basic credit check for a small fee.

With this information in hand, you have a better chance of making smart decisions when picking partners. In today's tough business climate, that could be a matter of life and death. ▼

SITES FOR SURE EYES

Staying one step ahead of your competitors is hard. These competitive intelligence (CI) sources make information gathering easy.

Learn about CI:

- **Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals *(www.scip.org)*** Here you'll find a description of CI, along with articles and information about courses and seminars.
- **The CI Resource Index *(www.bidigital.com/ci)*** Find information on associations, courses, software, and publications.

Stay on top of the news:

- **LexisNexis *(www.lexis-nexis.com)*** This subscription service offers a searchable database of more than 31,000 sources.
- **NewsAlert *(www.newsalert.com)*** Tailor the news you receive—from sources such as Business Wire, Internet Wire, the Dow Jones Publications Library, and Newsbytes—to your topics of interest.

Keep up with the trends:

- **Forrester Research *(www.forrester.com)*** conducts surveys and interviews executives to compile data and analysis of market trends and technology. You pay for the reports you want.
- **Gartner *(www.gartner.com)*** Full members have access to more than 30,000 reports on IT topics, as well as opinions from Gartner's analysts. Guests can view some free research and shop for reports.
- **Jupiter Media Metrix *(www.jmm.com)*** offers its clients research and analysis of technology's impact on a variety of industries.

—Nancy A. Lang

SPARTAN TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

UPGRADES FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM

MOTHERBOARDS

ABIT www.abit-usa.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
ABVH6-II	FCPGA 1	5	1	1	3/168	ATX	$81
ABVH6T	FCPGA 1	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$83
ABKT7E	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$91
ABKT7	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$97
ABKT7A	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$103
ABKT7-RAID	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$112
ABSL6	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$114
ABSA6R	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$114
ABBX133-RAID	FCPGA 1	5	1	1	3/168	ATX	$119
ABST6-RAID	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$119
ABSE6	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$124
ABKT7A-RAID	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$127
ABKG7-LITE	SOCKET A	6		1	2/DDR	ATX	$127
ABKG7	SOCKET A	6		1	4/DDR	ATX	$134
ABVP6	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$137
ABBL7	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$139
ABBW7	P4(SKT 423)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$139
ABTH7-RAID	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$159
ABBW7-RAID	P4(SKT 423)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$164
ABTH7II	P4(SKT 478)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$164
ABBL7-RAID	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$166
ABKG7-RAID	SOCKET A	6		1	4/DDR	ATX	$169
ABTH7II-RAID	P4(SKT 478)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$197

ASUS www.asus.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
ASA7V-E-WOA	SOCKET A	6		1+AMR	2/168	MATX	$76
ASCUV4X-C	FCPGA 1	5		1+AMR	2/168	ATX	$79
ASA7S-VM	SOCKET A	4			2/168	MATX	$89
ASTUV4X-WOA	FCPGA 1/2	6		1	3/168	ATX	$89
ASTUV4X-WA	FCPGA 1/2	6		1	3/168	ATX	$94
ASCUV4X	FCPGA 1	5	1	1	3/168	ATX	$100
ASCUSL2-C	FCPGA 1	6		1+2CNR	3/168	ATX	$102
ASCUV4X-V	FCPGA 1	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$107
ASTUSL2-C	FCPGA 1/2	6		1+2CNR	3/168	ATX	$127
ASA7V133	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$112
ASA7PRO	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$122
ASCUSL2-CBP	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$122
ASA7V-WOA	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$129
ASA7A266	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	2DDR/168	ATX	$129
ASCUV4X-D	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$149
ASP4B	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$152
ASA7M266	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$157
ASP4T	P4(SKT 423)	5		1	4/RIMM	ATX	$167
ASCUV266	FCPGA 1	5		1+ACR	3/DDR	ATX	$224
ASCUV4X-DLS	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$309
ASCUR-DLS	DUAL 370	7		ASMS	4/168	ATX	$669

intel www.intel.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
IND815EEA2L	FCPGA 1	5	LAN		3/168	ATX	$116
IND850GBC	P4(SKT 423)	5		1	4/RIMM	ATX	$149
IND850GBCAL	P4(SKT 423)	5	LAN	1	4/RIMM	ATX	$172

MSI www.msicomputer.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
MICKM133A	SOCKET A	3		1+CNR	2/168	MATX	$82
MICK7TTURBOLTD	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$102
MIC815EPRO	FCPGA 1	6		CNR	4/168	ATX	$102
MICK7TTURBO-R	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$112
MIC815EPPROR	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$115
MICPRO266MSTR	FCPGA 1	5		1+CNR	3DDR/168	ATX	$117
MICK7T266PRO	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	3/DDR	ATX	$117
MICPR266MSTR-R	FCPGA 1	5		1+CNR	3DDR/168	ATX	$127
MICK7MASTER	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	2/DDR	ATX	$132
MIC850PRO	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$144
MICK7TMASTER	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$244
MICK7MASTER-S	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	2/DDR	ATX	$274

GIGA-BYTE www.giga-byte.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
GBGA-7IXE4	SOCKET A	5	2	1	3/168	ATX	$64
GBGA-7IXE	SLOT A	5	2	1	3/168	ATX	$77
GBGA-7DXC	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$82
GBGA-7ZX-1R5	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$97
GBGA-7ZX-1	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$97
GBGA-7ZX5A	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$102
GBGA-7ZXR5	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$107
GBGA-7ZXR-R3	SOCKET A	6		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$127
GBGA-7DX	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$144
GBGA-8IDX	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$147
GBGA-8IDXH	P4(SKT 478)	6	LAN	1	3/168	ATX	$157
GBGA-8TXC	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$159
GBGA-7DXR	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/DDR	ATX	$159
GBGA-8TX	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$172

CPU'S

ALL CPU'S HAVE A 1 YEAR WARRANTY WHEN PURCHASED WITH A CPU FAN.

intel www.intel.com

INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.667MHZ	128K	$39
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.700MHZ	128K	$42
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.733MHZ	128K	$44
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.766MHZ	128K	$46
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.800MHZ	128K	$53
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.850MHZ	128K	$57
INTEL CELERON-A FCPGA	.900MHZ	128K	$62
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.667MHZ	256K FCPGA	$114
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.700MHZ	256K FCPGA	$116
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.733MHZ	256K FCPGA	$120
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.750MHZ	256K FCPGA	$125
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.800MHZ	256K FCPGA	$127
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.800MHZ	256K FCPGA	$127
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.850MHZ	256K FCPGA	$132
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.866MHZ	256K FCPGA	$142
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.933MHZ	256K FCPGA	$157
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.1000MHZ	256K FCPGA	$187
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.1100MHZ	256K FCPGA	$259
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.1200MHZ	256K FCPGA	$279
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.750MHZ	256K SECC	$92
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.800MHZ	256K SECC	$127
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.800MHZ	256K SECC	$129
INTEL PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	.850MHZ	256K SECC	$137
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.866MHZ	256K SECC	$139
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.933MHZ	256K SECC	$177
INTEL PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	.1000MHZ	256K SECC	$264
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1400MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$142
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1500MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$144
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1700MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$202
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1700MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$209
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1800MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$264
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.1900MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$402
INTEL PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	.2000MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$617

AMD www.amd.com

AMD K6 II W/3D NOW	.100 MHZ BUS	.P450MHZ	$29
AMD K6 II W/3D NOW	.100 MHZ BUS	.P500MZ	$30
AMD K6 II W/3D NOW	.100 MHZ BUS	.P550MHZ	$39
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P700MHZ	$34
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P750MHZ	$36
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P800MHZ	$43
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P850MHZ	$44
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P900MHZ	$55
AMD DURON	.200 MHZ BUS	.P950MHZ	$56
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P850MHZ	$59
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P900MHZ	$59
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P950MHZ	$62
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P1000MHZ	$84
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.266 MHZ BUS	.P1000MHZ	$76
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P1100MHZ	$92
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.266 MHZ BUS	.P1133MHZ	$91
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P1200MHZ	$99
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.266 MHZ BUS	.P1200MHZ	$96
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P1300MHZ	$107
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.266 MHZ BUS	.P1333MHZ	$104
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.200 MHZ BUS	.P1400MHZ	$114
AMD K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	.266 MHZ BUS	.P1400MHZ	$112
AMD SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	.P1000MHZ	$154
AMD SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	.P1200MHZ	$162
AMD SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	.P1400MHZ	$229

SOUND CARDS

CREATIVE www.creative.com

CLCT4520	SOUND BLSTR AWE 64 ISA OEM	$24
CLCT4750	SOUND BLSTR PCI 128 OEM	$31
CLSBLDBYOEM	SOUND BLSTR LIVE DOLBY 5.1 OEM	$33
CLCT4832	SOUND BLSTR LIVE VALUE PCI OEM	$45
CLSBLIVE5.1OE	SOUND BLSTR LIVE OEM	$61
CLSBLDBYR	SOUND BLSTR LIVE DOLBY 5.1 RETAIL	$65
CLSBLXG5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE X-GAMER RETAIL	$89
CLSBLMP3+5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE MP3+ RETAIL	$89
CLSBAUDMP3+R	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY MP3+ RETAIL	$89
CLSBLPLAT5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE PLATINUM RETAIL	$175
CLSBAUDPLATR	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY PLATINUM INT	$179
CLSBPLATEXTR	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY PLATINUM EXT	$227

MEMORY

72-PIN EDO

16MB	.4X32 EDO	.60NS	$8
32MB	.8X32 EDO	.60NS	$14
64MB	.16X32 EDO	.60NS	$23
128MB	.32X32 EDO	.60NS	$107

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128MB PC133	16X64	.7.5NS	$15
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MAX409-5400	40900	9 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$90
MAX307-7200	30700	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$101
MAX409-7200	40900	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$109
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MIT4805OEM	8X/4X/32X	ATAPI OEM	135MS	2048K	$64
MIT4808OEM	16X/8X/40X	ATAPI OEM	135MS	2048K	$86

YAMAHA www.yamaha.com

MODEL#	SPEED/TRANS	INTERFACE	ACCESS	CACHE	PRICE
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YACRW2100SZKIT	16X/10X/40X	SCSI	140MS	4096K	$167
YACRW2200EZKIT	20X/10X/40X	ATAPI	160MS	8192K	$209
YACRW2100FXZ	16X/10X/40X	FIREWIRE	160MS	8192K	$334
YACRW2200FXZ	20X/10X/40X	FIREWIRE	150MS	8192K	$344

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SYCRX140E/CH	8X/4X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$107
SYCRX160E/CH	12X/8X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$159
SYCRX1600L/A2	12X/8X/32X	FIREWIRE	150MS	4096K	$219
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3C2974	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/VOICE	$37
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PRACTICE safe E-MAIL

Don't let the ultimate killer app destroy your business.

by Richard Santalesa

Like many Americans, President Bush has an e-mail address at work. But he won't be sending any electronic missives over the next few years. In April, Bush publicly swore off e-mail, citing concerns over having his messages to friends and family enter the public record. Although Bush's stated reason for booting e-mail from the Oval Office centered on privacy issues, there's little doubt the problems that "smoking gun" e-mail caused for previous administrations weighed heavily on his decision.

How can the rest of us, who can't give up e-mail, balance the conflicting issues of privacy, corporate liability, and fair treatment of employees? After all, the last thing you want is a call from Human Resources that starts, "We have a problem." And the potential for problems is growing. E-mail traffic in the United States is projected to top 9 billion messages per day by the end of 2003, according to IDC. That amounts to a lot of opportunities for your company to be legally liable for defamation, sexual harassment, and discrimination, not to mention the chances for critical corporate information to fall into the wrong hands. Today, 52 percent of such information is stored within a messaging system, according to IT management consulting firm Creative Networks.

The scope and magnitude of the situation can be daunting. Consider these tidbits from an American Management Association (AMA) survey: Nearly two-thirds of responding companies disciplined employees for abuse of office e-mail or Internet connections, and 27 percent of respondents fired employees for such abuse. Moreover, 70 percent of employer-versus-employee lawsuits now include e-mail as evidence, and 56 percent of employees with e-mail have received messages of a sexist, racist, or inappropriate nature. Still think monitoring is only for the paranoid? In 2000, 40 percent of companies monitored e-mail, and 54 percent monitored overall Internet usage.

USE POLICIES

Although the Electronic Communications Privacy Act made it a crime to intercept e-mail, exceptions allow businesses to monitor employee e-mail transmitted over corporate networks. Nonetheless, any company that plans to scan e-mail or change its behavior regarding e-mail use, storage, or scanning should detail everything in a written e-mail policy and stick to it, insists Charles L. Mudd, an attorney and co-chair of the American Bar Association's Privacy and Computer Crime committee. The courts have sanctioned companies, sometimes severely, for disregarding their own e-mail usage policies. In fact, the only thing worse than not having an e-mail policy is having one and not following it.

If your e-mail policy mentions nothing about monitoring e-mail content, employees could have an expectation of e-mail privacy. If you initiate scanning without updating and distributing a new e-mail policy,

your company could wind up on the losing end of lawsuits launched by employees fired or disciplined because of the content of their e-mails. Laws vary by state, so be sure to consult an attorney when drafting an e-mail policy. There's general agreement, however, on what every e-mail policy needs. First, it should clearly explain what's expected of both employees and the company, and the explanation should be in plain language. A good policy should reveal how long e-mail and backups are stored and list what's considered acceptable e-mail use and conduct. It should also outline the following realities of e-mail:

- It can be as legally binding as a formal letter.
- Sent using the company's domain, it is a reflection on the company.
- Though seemingly transitory, it can be permanent in nature.

If possible, your e-mail policy should further include the steps you'll take in the event of e-mail misuse. It also makes sense to hold short educational seminars whenever you distribute new e-mail policies. After all, many people simply don't understand the legal, technical, and business issues lurking beneath their e-mail clients' Send buttons.

Software solutions are springing up to help you create, manage, distribute, and enforce e-mail policies. Products such as Conqwest's e-Minder ***(www.conqwest.com/eminder.htm)*** let you stay on top of policy changes, document that employees have signed and understood the policy, and periodically remind employees of the issues involved. In most cases, it's money well-spent.

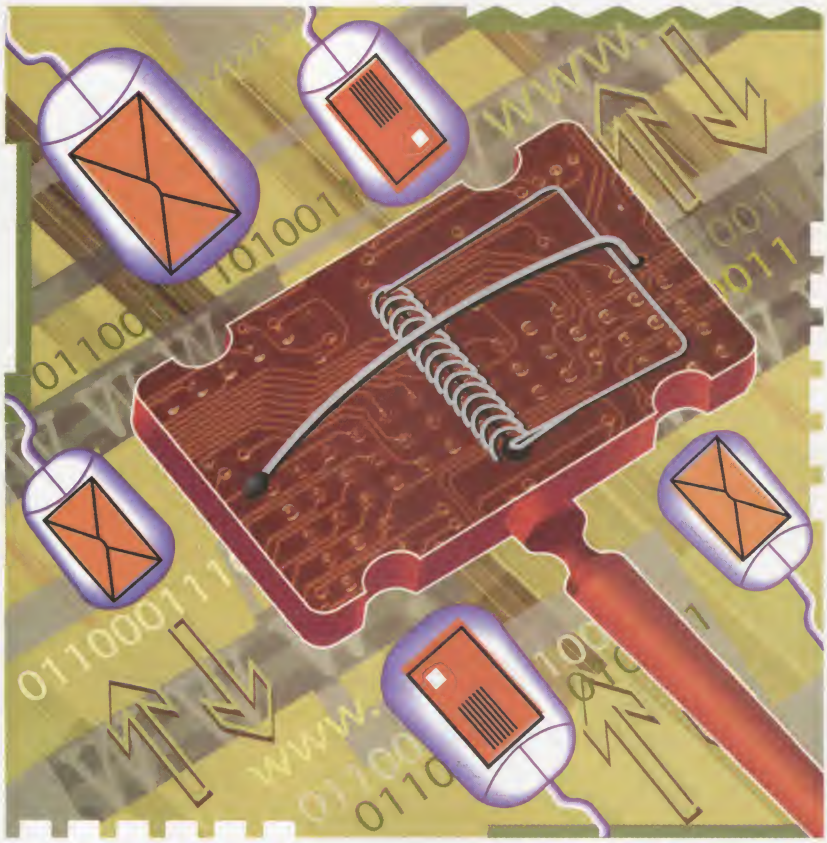

ILLUSTRATION BY BEK SHAKIROV

SCANNING TOOLS

In a perfect world, such steps wouldn't be necessary. In the real world, where employees are quick to take umbrage and lawyers work on a contingency basis, even companies that prefer trust over technology are implementing scanning to demonstrate they're taking "reasonable" steps to deter, detect, and deal with incidents of harassment, discrimination, and other legally liable behavior. Why? Courts have often dismissed employee suits brought against companies that responded promptly to the underlying initial incident.

E-mail content scanning is a rapidly maturing category, and products are rushing in to fill the growing need. IDC predicts the worldwide market for content-security tools will reach $925 million by 2004, up from $66 million in 1999.

Basic content scanners sit on the network in the data stream between your mail servers and employees' mail clients. Using various defined rules and proprietary algorithms, the software scans e-mail and attachments for transgressions and records them in a database before sending an e-mail alert or notification to an appropriate manager. But applications go beyond that. Group Software's SecuriQ Suite ***(www.group-software.com)***, for instance, is designed to do three things: deflect legal liability by archiving selective information and transgressions, and including disclaimer trailers; keep information secure by protecting against viruses and preventing the release of confidential material; and maintain network efficiency by detecting spam and mass mailing of large files and attachments, and thwarting denial-of-service and other attacks. "People are always surprised by the sheer volume of items caught and blocked," notes Amy Kessler, Group Software's vice president and general manager.

Though outsourced application-service-provider (ASP) and managed-service-provider (MSP) solutions exist, most e-mail monitoring and scanning software installs on a server in your data center. The leaders in this category include Baltimore Technologies' Mailsweeper ***(www.baltimore.com)***, Elron Software's IM Message Inspector ***(www.elronsoftware.com)***, Pearl Software's Pearl Echo ***(www.pearlsoftware.com)***, SurfControl's SuperScout ***(www.surfcontrol.com)***, Group Software's SecuriQ.Wall, United Messaging's Message Control ***(www.unitedmessaging.com/solutions/cnavSolB.cfm)***, and MessageLabs' SkyScan ***(www.messagelabs.com)***, which specializes in filtering out pornography.

Most of these packages are pieces of broader suites that also offer such features as Web-content control and scanning, archiving, spam filtering, outgoing e-mail disclaimer trailers, antivirus protection, and Internet-use-policy management.

One of the newest products on the market is from Zone Labs, creator of desktop firewall ZoneAlarm Pro ***(www.zonealarm.com)***. Zone Labs Integrity, which runs on a server, works closely with ZoneAlarm to secure both the desktop and the company infrastructure through e-mail policies and policy management. The product will also be a part of Cisco Systems' 3000 series concentrators.

Another recent entry is BVRP USA's Mail Warden ***(www.bvrpusa.com)***, a combination e-mail content-security and antivirus product for Microsoft Exchange, Lotus Domino, and SMTP platforms. A wizard lets administrators set specific rules for filtering incoming and outgoing mail, and quarantine any messages trapped as a result of these rules. Administrators can also set up the software to receive notification if a rule is violated.

IT managers searching for a self-contained solution can choose between two Linux-based turnkey hardware appliances from eSniff ***(www.esniff.com)***. The eSniff 1000 device scans the e-mail of up to 100 users, and eSniff 1100 is designed for organizations with more than 1,000 users. The all-in-one

design makes it easy to get the device running and configured.

Top content scanners need to be flexible, however, and lend themselves to scanning policies that align with the overall corporate culture and any written e-mail policy. eSniff's design strikes a happy medium between providing company managers with adequate notice of improper e-mail conduct and carving out a pocket of privacy for employees. It accomplishes this by reporting and capturing only the incidents and data that fall outside the rules—eBoundaries, in eSniff-speak—defining your acceptable-use policies. Everything else simply passes in and out, so an e-mail love letter to a spouse, as long as it's not too racy, would probably fly off without leaving any significant record. Like other products, eSniff categorizes its rules by subject area, such as confidential information, gambling, games, pornography, sports, and substance abuse. eSniff can also monitor Web-page accesses, FTP transfers, and Telnet, so it could be all a small to medium-size company needs. Whichever content scanner you choose, be sure it reports infractions in detail and records offending messages in their entirety.

Though scanning often strikes many people as invasive, Group Software's Kessler disagrees. "It's not about Big Brother; it's about managing your technical assets and leveraging them appropriately," she insists. "It's also about ensuring the organization is protected, as well as the individuals."

ENCRYPTION AND AUTHENTICATION

The flip side of monitoring e-mail is ensuring information within messages and attachments doesn't fall into the wrong hands as it bounces around the Internet. When you want absolutely no one but the intended recipient to read a message, encryption is the only practical solution. But if encryption is the poster child for security, authentication and digital signing, which are almost as vital, are its poor stepchildren.

Although Outlook, Outlook Express, and other popular mail clients include free support for Secure/Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions (S/MIME), which provides encryption, authentication, and signing, few people actually use S/MIME. It's cumbersome, and getting the necessary certificate can be awkward. Luckily, plenty of other encryption and authentication options exist.

Many industrial-strength encryption servers are available for corporate use, including AbsoluteFuture's SafeMessage Server *(www.safemessage.com)*, Group Software's SecuriQ.Crypt, Hilgraeve's

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HyperSend *(www.hilgraeve.com)*, CertifiedMail's CertifiedMail Server *(www.certifiedmail.com)*, PGP Security's E-Business Server *(www.pgp.com)*, Tumbleweed Communications' SPN *(www.tumbleweed.com)*, and ZipLip's Messaging Application Server Platform *(www.ziplip.com)*. Finally, outsourced secure mail solutions, such as those from ZixIt *(www.zixit.com)*, Hush Communications *(www.hush.com)*, and Sigaba *(www.sigaba.com)*, provide encryption without an up-front investment in security infrastructure.

Don't worry about employees using such measures to sidestep your policy restrictions. Most e-mail content scanners can detect when such encrypted messages pass by. Although you won't know what's in the message, it should raise a red flag.

Extending encryption even further is e-mail that expires and disappears past a defined date. This ability sets AbsoluteFuture's SafeMessage *(www.safemessage.com)* and Policy Server *(www.omniva.com)* from Omniva (formerly Disappearing Inc.) apart. In addition to strong encryption, both let you set an expiration date after which messages automatically self-destruct. Now *that's* security. Another offering in the same vein is Authentica's range of "recall" products. The Authentica MailRecall system *(www.authentica.com)* is a terrific example of active rights management. With it, you can control what recipients do with messages. For instance, you can disable printing, copying, pasting, and forwarding.

TAKE CARE

Although the Web, streaming media, MP3s—you name it—have all tried to wrest the crown from e-mail, messaging remains the ultimate killer app. Used with caution and concern, and managed properly, e-mail can still be your company's best tool. ▼

SITES FOR safe E-MAIL

"We didn't know" is no defense when it comes to potential liability. Fortunately, it isn't hard to familiarize yourself with the basic issues of security, legal compliance, and encryption.

POLICIES

- An Employer's Approach to E-Mail Policies *(www.cybercounsel.com/CyberCounsel/an_employer.htm)*
- Safeguarding Against the Pitfalls of Workplace E-Mail: The Issues and Challenges of Drafting an Enterprise E-Mail Policy *(www.unitedmessaging.com/assets/pdf/epolicy_white_paper.pdf)*
- E-Mail Policy Information Center *(www.unitedmessaging.com/solutions/epolicycenter.cfm)*

LEGAL INFORMATION

- Employee E-Mail Privacy Rights in the Private Sector Workplace *(www.law.emory.edu/ELJ/volumes/fall98/rodriguez.html)*
- White Paper on Electronic Document Retention *(www.omniva.com/why/11_Overly_Whitepaper.pdf)*
- American Bar Association Labor and Employment Law Section: Communications Technology in the Workplace *(www.bna.com/bnabooks/ababna/stdev/stdev.htm)*
- Workplace Privacy and Information Issues *(www.bna.com/bnabooks/ababna/tech/tech.htm#2001)*
- LRN's Legal Compliance Education Center *(www.lrn.com/lrnsite/main11.html)*
- Five Steps to Designing a Computer Usage Policy *(webmd-practice.medcast.com/Z/Channels/3119/article151)*
- HIPAA: Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information *(www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/finalmaster.html)*
- Complying With HIPAA: A Technical Whitepaper *(www.sigaba.com/products/Sigaba_HIPAA.pdf)*
- Pew Internet & American Life Project: Fear of Online Crime *(www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?report=32)*
- Surprising Internet Usage Statistics *(www.websense.com/products/why/stats.cfm)*
- Computer Security Resource Center Advanced Encryption Standard *(csrc.nist.gov/encryption/aes)*

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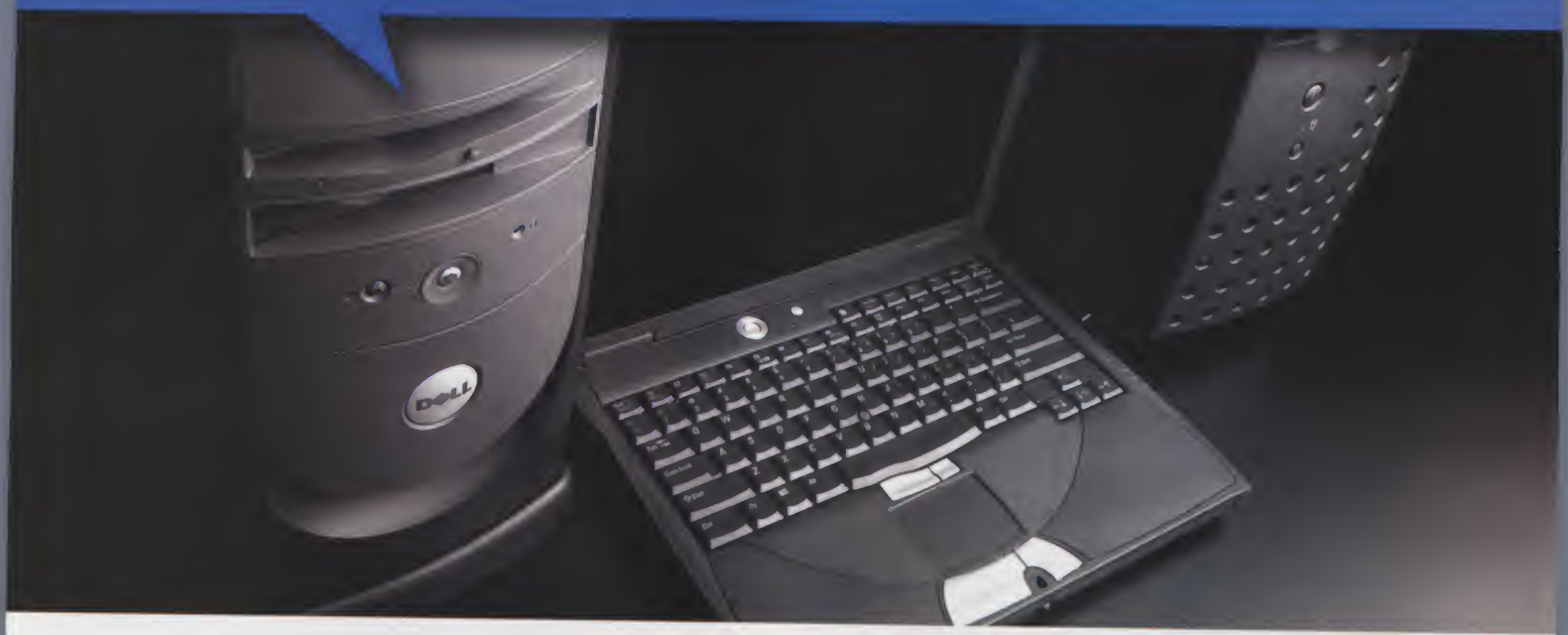

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Corporate IT Buying Behavior and Customer Satisfaction Study
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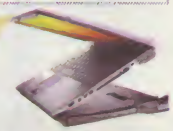

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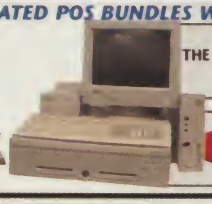

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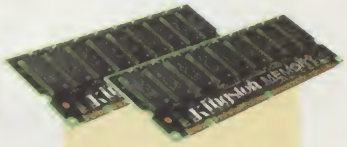

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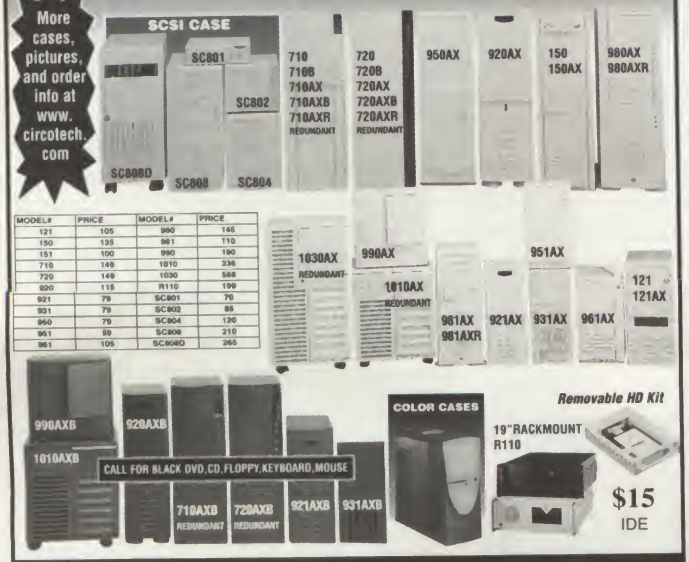

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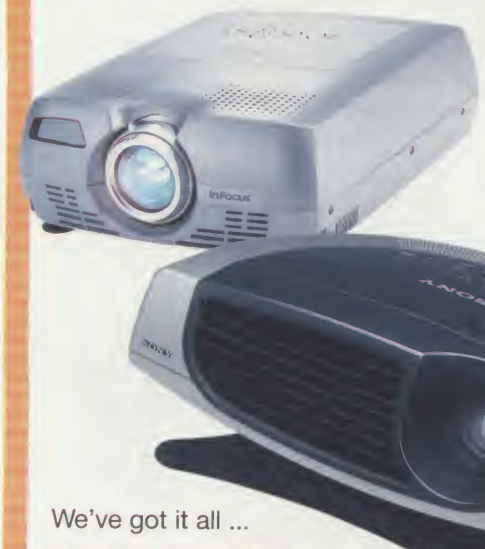

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10 DOWNLOADS for optimal computing

BY ADAM FISHER

Whether you're looking to search smarter, tweak your UI, or guard against hackers, these programs from ZDNet Downloads will keep your PC in tip-top shape. Head to *www.zdnet.com/downloads* to make the most of your computing experience.

1 BearShare

BearShare is an up-and-coming Napster alternative based on Gnutella peer-to-peer network technology. The latest version offers enhanced documentation and simplified setup. The client works with a variety of file types, including MP3, MPEG, JPEG, and GIF, and offers powerful connection-management tools. For example, you can control the number of hosts connecting to your computer and determine whether they can download your shared files.

2 Belarc Advisor

Belarc Advisor tells you just about everything you need to know about your system by taking a snapshot that summarizes information about its processor, memory, BIOS, bus/clock, hardware, and software. Best of all, the data that Belarc gathers resides locally on your hard drive and is not sent to a Web server. The product is free for personal use; an expanded version is available for purchase.

3 CNET CatchUp

Keeping your PC up to date can be a brain drain, considering all the software upgrades, driver updates, and security and system patches you have to remember. Now there's an easier way: **CNET CatchUp** can help you quickly and easily find what you need to keep your PC healthy. After you install and run CatchUp, the software scans your system and generates a list of installed software, drivers, and patches. With the click of a button, CatchUp takes you to a CNET page where you can view (and download) a personalized list of recommended software updates. (CNET Networks is the parent company of *Computer Shopper*.)

4 Copernic 2001

Copernic is metasearch software that serves up lightning-quick search results in a fully customizable format. Results can be sorted by relevance, site address, search engine, or title, and Copernic is fully integrated with Internet Explorer. Searches are executed through predefined channels, including Web, newsgroups, and merchandise. An upgrade to the program's pay version offers even more channels, including tech reviews and genealogy. Copernic also has tons of other cool features, making this a download that's definitely worth the bandwidth.

5 Download Accelerator

Download Accelerator can boost your download speeds by as much as 300 percent, according to ZDNet tests. The program integrates with Internet Explorer and Netscape, and automatically pops up to make downloads smooth and fast, enabling you to schedule multiple downloads and postpone current downloads. Note that the software is free but contains advertising technology that may use your Internet connection to display ads.

6 East-Tec Eraser 2000

Because "delete" never really means "forever"—and your Windows Temp folder can hold thousands of unneeded files and documents—**East-Tec Eraser 2000** is a download that's well-worth the money. The software will completely erase user-defined sensitive documents and Internet files, and can even destroy previously deleted files that might remain on your hard drive. Several security options (and levels) are available. This download is a 30-day trial version; the full version costs $19.95.

7 MS Windows Error Messages

Microsoft is infamous for error messages so inscrutable that you'd have to be a coder to understand them. Fortunately, **MS Windows Error Messages** helps you make sense of these cryptic communiqués by displaying a descriptive message explaining the code's meaning. In addition, the program contains an Error Code List, another handy resource for correlating codes to error messages.

8 RAM Idle

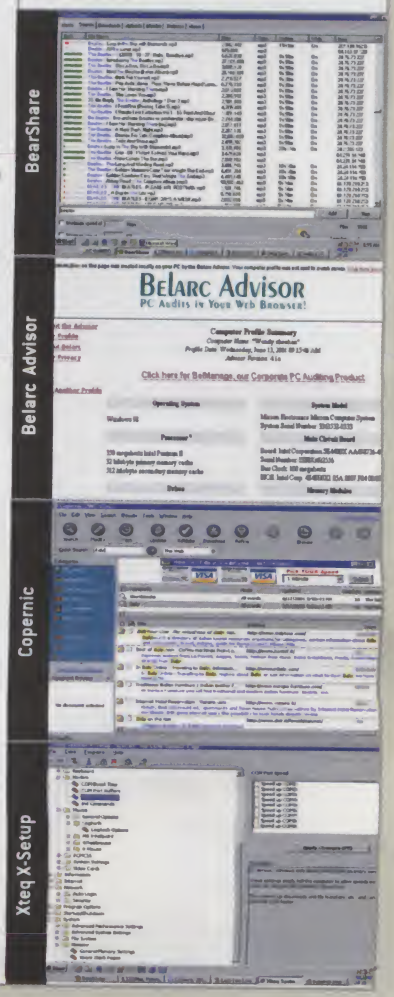
Several programs let you tweak your PC's performance by boosting the availability of system RAM, but we like **RAM Idle** for its clean interface and optional taskbar icon that displays the amount of RAM in use. You also can configure the software to defragment and open a set amount of RAM when a specified minimum is reached. What's more, you can manually configure memory settings for optimal performance during extreme-use scenarios like 3D gaming.

9 Xteq X-Setup

Are you aiming to become an alpha geek and tweak even the most obscure system controls? If so, check out the newest version of **Xteq X-Setup,** which helps you change hundreds of hidden settings in the operating system and also in popular programs. Two display modes are available: The Default UI is based on a hierarchical file display, and the Wizard helps you change specific settings step by step. All in all, it's one of the handiest tools we've seen.

10 ZoneAlarm

If you have a cable or DSL modem, here's a great reason to surf straight to the ZDNet Downloads site: a free firewall to guard against hackers. Whenever **ZoneAlarm** blocks an event, you're notified via a pop-up window that provides further details. In addition, the software protects against VBS e-mail attachments and allows you to disable Internet access with a single mouse click. Most important, unlike other robust firewall programs, ZoneAlarm is free for personal use. ▼



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ALICE & BILL

The Hard Edge

BY ALICE HILL AND BILL O'BRIEN

Alice keeps it real during the downturn; Bill does XP en masse, and then some; and a bit about your drawers.

TOO MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE DOT-COM DOWNTURN, AND Alice is not about to add fuel to the fire. This summer, as San Francisco began leaking jobs and long-absent "For Rent" signs started popping up all over town, she decided to flee the mounting hysteria and join her family for a much-needed beach vacation.

Alice would normally spare "Hard Edge" readers tales of beachside barbecues and unexpectedly fierce jellyfish invasions, but one thing struck her as she happily prepared to settle into a world of low-tech or even no-tech relief. It seems "everyday people" like her family now love technology. This is no small thing, and it bears a closer look if we're ever to come out of this downturn on a positive note.

Consider the following: When Alice started coming to these family vacations, she was the "oddball with gadgets," or OWG, as Bill liked to call her. *(I actually called her "Geek Girl."—Bill)* No one understood her frustration when her cell phone couldn't find a signal on the beach. Her laptop was viewed as an annoying object that took up too much of the family table, and the monotonous connection sound of the modem drew cold, skeptical glances from adult and child alike.

A few years later, two 12-year-old cousins shyly asked one night if they could log on to AOL to check e-mail, and they instantly earned OWG status along with Alice.

"Hallie spends hours and hours on AOL," her mother told Alice in disbelief. Across the board, it seemed the adults were now willing to provide PCs for the family. The grown-ups secretly marveled at how their kids could find their way around a system and around the Internet with ease, but technology simply didn't interest the elders.

Flash-forward to this summer: Picture the radical transformation that's occurred without any fanfare or comment whatsoever. The kitchen counter is littered with cell phones (although the beach-connection problem is as bad as ever). The adults beam dictionaries and world clocks to one another's Palm devices. When Alice complimented one relative on her new Palm, she sniffed and pointed out, "It's a Visor, not a Palm."

Was Alice in the right place?

It got stranger still. Over breakfast, one adult casually asked Alice when vending machines would be able to accept digital coins beamed from cell phones. A nearby 5-year-old played with a VTech learning laptop that flipped open like Alice's new Dell Inspiron, offering hours of educational puzzles and songs. There were two Nintendo Game Boys in the house, including the new Game Boy Advance and a daunting assortment of cartridges, and even the 60-plus adults asked to check e-mail and download dinner recipes.

They say revolutions can happen in an instant, but Alice was amazed at how quickly all these people had fully adopted technology in their daily lives. There was no more geeky "Gee whiz, look at my new laptop" conversation than you'd expect to hear about a VCR remote. But like a good remote, the usefulness of the tools and the simple way they played a part in people's daily lives gave Alice some much-needed hope about what was happening out West.

So what can be learned from Alice's little technical microcosm? For one thing, tech stocks and bad Internet companies are being swept away as fast as they appeared, but technical skills and the adoption of simple technical tools aren't going away. This doesn't make a high-end "Hard Edge" reader out of everyone who buys a Palm, but it does mean the high-end, OWG niche isn't the only market now for these useful and often groundbreaking new tools.

Which got Alice thinking and fantasizing about next year's beach sojourn. Amid the crashing waves, she dreamt of discussing the power of TiVo and firing up her new Xbox system while the DVD recorder burned a disc of family-vacation footage for every member present. Then again, dreams sometimes miss the real thing sitting right in front of you, which Bill summed up beautifully once Alice managed to call him from the beach: Technology is here to stay, folks, and Alice and Bill and "Hard Edge" readers were there first! *(What I really said was, "Huh...? Wha...? It's 3:30 a.m. on the East Coast."—Bill)*

THE XP FILES

So there was Bill, playing with the latest generation of Frankenputer (probably version 27), when he decided to install Windows XP Release Candidate 1 (the only available version in "Hard Edge" time). Not a bad thing to install, but not great. Bill lost the use of his sound card, an Aureal SQ2500. It worked fine from Windows 95 through Me, but XP didn't like it. He also lost his CD-RW drive. XP doesn't like Easy CD Creator 5 Platinum even though Roxio, the software's creator, claims to have supplied Microsoft with the basic CD-write capability for XP. Better still, Easy CD 5 can't read the CD-R discs created by XP. Oh, and CyberLink's PowerDVD doesn't work, either. Bill had to switch to DVD software positioned for Win 2K.

Come to think of it, it was a pretty lousy install, and the worst was yet to come.

Sure, there was the 25-character install code key. But XP also needs to be registered, or it stops working. You can do that through the Internet. But if you're (justifiably?) paranoid like Bill, you can call an 800 number.

ILLUSTRATION BY TIM COOK

After installation, XP generates a 52-character registration key. You recite this number to the operator when you call in, and the operator gives you a 50-character registration confirmation key to enter into the spaces provided by Windows XP.

No, that's not the worst part.

Around Bill, no computer remains untouched for long (and few have their cases intact). So it came to pass one Friday evening that Bill decided to pull the SDR SDRAM motherboard and replace it with an Asus CUV266 stocked with 512MB of DDR. (Let us digress a moment. Crucial Technology, ***www.crucial.com,*** in "Hard Edge" time is selling 128MB modules of non-ECC DDR SDRAM for only $32.39. That is *soooo* cheap. It was $119 not more than a few months ago.) The motherboard swap went fine, and Bill stuck a 1GHz Pentium III on the board in place of the 933MHz CPU that was originally in the system. And of course, a new Sound Blaster sound card had to be installed as well. (All right, XP wasn't so much a lousy install as it was a costly one. Or maybe both.) Then he powered the system on.

Shazaaam! Up comes Windows XP, and there's a message telling Bill he has only eight days remaining to register the software. Say what? Was it déjà vu all over again? There was nothing Bill could do on a Friday evening (even without the computer) because the XP phone registration desk is open only on weekdays. Monday arrives, and after a weekend of clicking the close box on the ever-persistent reminder, Bill registers it again.

Apparently, XP knows when you've changed stuff around. Why? The better question: "Does Microsoft keep track of things like that?" followed by "Why?" What's going on here? Why is XP so intrusive? And why are only a relative handful of people yelling in outrage? Depending on what's actually happening, there could be a major privacy issue here. If you change your system around, as Bill did, can Microsoft deny you a new registration because it thinks you're installing your single-user-licensed copy of XP on multiple systems? How do you prove you're not if you're here and they're there? Aaarrghhh!

You really do need to do something about it, like maybe drop the folks at Microsoft a note telling them how terribly wrong-thinking such a practice is. In fact, you can send them an e-mail by going to the page titled, "Let us know how we can improve our products" ***(register.microsoft.com/regsys/custom/wishwizard.asp)***. Don't think twice—it's the "Hard Edge" thing to do.

No matter how craftily Bill tried to download XP while using Netscape, Netscape always crashed.

XP P.S.

By the way, did we forget to mention that no matter how craftily Bill tried to download XP while using Netscape, Netscape always crashed? Perplexed for several minutes, Bill just happened to try Internet Exploder. Guess what? The download worked just fine. Didn't Microsoft get into trouble for something like that?

XP P.P.S.

Just as Bill was finishing his half of "The Hard Edge," Microsoft sent him a notice that XP RC 2 was available for download. He went to the site (using Internet Exploder, naturally) but couldn't get anywhere. It was the same night the Code Red worm was trolling the Internet. We can't tell you for certain the worm crashed Microsoft's download site, but after two hours of attempts to access the page, all ending in failure, Bill just gave up.

QUICK NOTE

Bill has a problem. No, not that one. He often needs to try several operating systems on the same hardware. Until recently, that meant physically installing an OS and all the associated hardware drivers each time. Then Bill graduated to using several hard drives, which he would plug and unplug as the need arose. It was quicker, but still time-consuming (and stressful on the data cables Bill yanked out of the drives).

Then Bill found paradise. Thousands of you probably already know this, but Bill spends a lot of time in the Lab of Doom and Pepsi-Cola. He was trolling TC Computers' Web site when he stumbled on the StarTech line of hard drive drawers. You install the carrier in a 5.25-inch bay, install the hard drive in a removable drawer, then slide the drawer into the carrier. Better still, spare removable drawers are available, so you can use several hard drives in the same system. (Side benefit: For those of you who've connected your hard drive's LED cable to your motherboard backward and don't see the LED light up during hard drive activity, there's a light on the drawer that does the job.) Now Bill is swapping drives with reckless abandon.

One note: It really does pay to look around. Although Bill found the first StarTech drive drawer at TC Computers, Buy.com was selling the drawers for less. (By now you've probably noticed what seems like a shameless ad campaign for several online companies running through this month's "Hard Edge." Well, Alice and Bill have been receiving letters asking them, "Where's the best place to buy…?" Who knows what the best place for anything is? It just may help to know where Alice and Bill buy their stuff. If you don't like their choices, write and say so, and they'll stop. You may also write if you do like the idea.)

QUICKER REMINDER

If you've been champing at the bit for a Pentium 4, keep in mind that Bill is adamantly opposed to you buying one before the smaller, faster ones are available. If that hasn't happened already, it should soon. Of course, the first batch will probably be bitterly expensive, so you may want to wait a month or three for the prices to dip.

Why not run out and buy one of the big, phat Pentium 4s right now? They're obsolete. And if Intel has continued to reduce prices on them, it's only to clear inventory. We end up with enough obsolete equipment on our desks soon after we buy the stuff. Why buy it when it's already obsolete? (Just ask all those Pentium 60/66 owners out there.)

WHAT, NO E-MAIL?

Ask yourself how long it's been since you dropped Alice and Bill a line. Don't you think it's about time? This month, Alice and Bill are looking for stories about your own family's tech experiences. Have they entered the digital age like you? Or are you still the odd one out when it comes to technical gadgetry and hard-core "Hard Edge" know-how? Tell Alice and Bill—you're not alone! *(Well, maybe we all are if ZDNet never puts the e-mail link back. —Bill)*

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hardedge@zdnet.com

Computer Shopper's

essential guide

20 Ways to Shop Smart Online

How to Shop Safe

1 Make Your Connection Secure

Before you submit any sensitive or private information about yourself—especially your credit-card number—make sure that the data will be encrypted and transmitted over a secure connection. Both your browser and the Web site's server should support industry standards, such as Secure Electronic Transaction (SET) or Secure Sockets Layer (SSL).

2 Protect Your Passwords

Don't create a password based on information that can be easily discovered, such as your birth date, telephone number, or Social Security number. Instead, use a unique combination of at least five letters, numbers, or symbols.

3 Protect Your Privacy

Take a moment to read the company's privacy policy, which should detail what information the site collects and how it will be used.

Limit your exposure by filling out online forms carefully. Don't volunteer optional information. Instead, provide only the information required to complete a transaction.

Never divulge information—such as your mother's maiden name—that can be used to gain unauthorized access to your accounts.

Various free and fee-based Web services will let you surf and shop anonymously. For example, Anonymizer (***www.anonymizer.com***) or Privada (***www.privada.net***) will let you visit Web sites without revealing your name or e-mail address.

4 Use an Insured Payment Method

Paying for your online purchases with a credit or charge card isn't just convenient—it's smart. Your transaction is protected by the Fair Credit Billing Act, which gives you the right to dispute charges and to withhold payment until the dispute is settled. In addition, if your credit or charge card is used fraudulently, you are normally liable for only $50 of the total amount.

Cash payments are increasingly common on the Internet, thanks to online auction sites. For large sums, you should use a fee-based escrow service, such as i-Escrow (***www.iescrow.com***) or Tradesafe (***www.tradesafe.com***).

5 Check References

Look for the Better Business Bureau Online Reliability Seal (***www.bbbonline.org***), which guarantees that a company has been in business for a minimum of one year, has become a member of a local Better Business Bureau, and agrees to arbitration in case of a dispute.

BizRate (***www.bizrate.com***) conducts customer surveys and publishes ratings for categories such as quality of merchandise, quality of customer service, and timeliness of shipping.

Auction sites such as eBay (***www.ebay.com***) provide a feedback section, where purchasers can comment on the reliability of individual sellers.

6 Check the Terms of the Sale

Reputable online retailers display the terms and conditions of the sale, including warranties on the merchandise, limitations of liability, and return and refund policies. Some sites display this information prominently on a "click-wrap" screen that requires you to accept the terms before completing the purchase. Other sites provide links to the information.

7 Include Taxes and Shipping

Scrutinize the shipping and handling fees tacked onto your bill. Per-item fees and expedited shipping methods can bloat the total purchase price. Look for sites that offer low-cost shipping methods or that deliver free of charge when you place a large order. Charging sales tax is required by law in many states.

8 Double-Check Order Forms

Before you finalize a purchase, proofread your order form. Typos, such as typing "22" instead of "2," can be costly mistakes. If your shipping address differs from your billing address, there is no way for the vendor to confirm its accuracy, so double-check it yourself. You should also make sure that the pricing information you see onscreen is absolutely current and not an old price from a page that was cached on your system during a previous visit.

9 Estimate the Delivery Date

The seller should inform you of an approximate delivery date. Federal Trade Commission rules state that if the seller does not specify a time period in which the product will be shipped, the merchant must either ship the product within 30 days, or notify you of the delay and offer to cancel the order and refund your money.

10 Complain About Problems

If you do experience a problem with an online purchase, notify the company immediately. Check the Web site for a toll-free phone number, an e-mail address, or links to customer service. If the company itself does not resolve the problem, contact the Better Business Bureau (***www.bbbonline.org***), the Federal Trade Commission at ***www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.htm***, or your state attorney general's office (***www.naag.org***).

Save Time & Money

1 Charge It
Don't pay by check: Always use a credit card or e-cash whenever you buy online.

2 Look for Seals
Look for seals of approval—from Yahoo, TRUSTe, and the Better Business Bureau. These ensure that the company is legitimate and that your personal information will be protected.

3 Get Help
When you have questions, use online customer-service support features, including online chat and voice-over-IP functions, as well as toll-free numbers.

4 Buy Big
Consider buying smaller items such as printer toner cartridges, diskettes, Zip disks, and cables in volume to save money.

5 Save and Print
Save a copy of your online order receipt by saving the Web page locally. For extra security, print it out.

6 Clip and Save
Almost all vendors offer coupons and rebates, but few consumers bother to find them.

7 Track Your Delivery
Pay attention to shipping information and options to learn when your order is supposed to arrive. If at all possible, get a tracking number.

8 Buy Used
Check closeout or refurbished product sections. These often include amazing bargains. Just make sure they include some sort of warranty.

9 Search Smart
Use bots, or automated search engines, to compare prices among resellers. But be aware of possible bias—some bots are hosted by sites that also sell products.

10 Be Specific
If you know the name and model number, enter them for much faster searching.

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THE VIDEO CD REVOLUTION

CREATING (AND SHARING) YOUR OWN VIDEO CDs IS EASIER THAN YOU THINK.

BY SHELDON LEEMON

WITH DVDs IN every video store and library, it's plain to see those shiny little discs aren't just for music anymore. If you don't mind investing in some not-so-inexpensive hardware, you may want to burn your own DVDs. (For more information on doing so, see our Shopper's Guide, "Do-It-Yourself DVDs," in this issue's Features section.) Otherwise, you may find CD-R or CD-RW discs can hold all the video you need.

With a capacity of roughly 650MB, CD-R and CD-RW discs can accommodate about 74 minutes of video at a resolution of 352 by 240—about VHS quality—and 15 to 20 minutes at 720 by 480—the resolution of DVD. The 352-by-240 resolution, referred to as Video CD (VCD) format, is widely used in some parts of the world and has built up steam in the United States since CD recorders began selling at mass-market prices. Unless you plan to show hours of home-video footage at a time (to the horror of your stupefied audience), CD-R and CD-RW should prove just right for preserving precious moments of everything from birthday parties to school assemblies. They're also perfect for sharing clips with family and friends because you can play them on just about any home computer, and even on some stand-alone DVD players. (See the sidebar "DVD-Player Compatibility.")

Making VCDs isn't as easy as burning your own music CDs, but the combination of inexpensive, high-quality video-digitizing hardware and improved CD-writing software makes it much less complicated than you might think. In this Tune-Up, we'll lead you step-by-step through the process.

1. CHECK YOUR SYSTEM

You don't need an extraordinary computer setup to create VCDs, but having a fairly current computer will help. You should have at least a 300MHz processor for low-resolution MPEG-1 videos or a 500MHz processor for DVD-quality MPEG-2 videos. A minimum of 1GB to 2GB of available hard drive space is necessary to create low-resolution videos, and up to 10GB is handy for high-resolution videos. You'll want at least 128MB of RAM, as well as a graphics card that supports DirectX overlays; most current cards do. Any CD-R or CD-RW drive will do to create the discs, but if you plan to play them back right off the CD, you'll want a 32x or faster CD reader.

2. SELECT A TARGET FORMAT

Your choice of video resolution and compression will determine how much video you can fit on a CD-R or CD-RW disc and how good that video will look. Choosing a target format early in the process will help you make intelligent decisions as you move forward.

Video CD 2.0 (VCD) is a recognized international standard for video on CD that predates DVD and is widely used in some countries, such as China. It uses MPEG-1 compression at a resolution of 352 by 240, so the picture quality is about the same as VHS (a little worse, actually). Almost all stand-alone DVD players will play these discs as long as they can read the media (see the sidebar "DVD-Player Compatibility"), and Windows Media Player will play MPEG-1 files without additional software or decoding hardware.

Super Video CD (SVCD) uses a higher resolution than VCD—480 by 480—and MPEG-2 encoding to deliver a better picture, but fewer DVD

players play SVCDs. To play SVCDs on a computer, you need a software DVD player. Playing time is as little as half that of VCD.

Extended formats (XVCD and SXVCD) aren't true standards, just discs with the directory structure of VCD or SVCD that contain video files encoded at 720 by 480. XVCD uses MPEG-1 compression, while SXVCD uses MPEG-2, giving it the same resolution and compression scheme as DVD video. Only a few stand-alone DVD players play these discs, which contain as little as 10 to 15 minutes of video. You can play them back on all computers using a software DVD player.

The format you select depends on what you value most—compatibility and long playing time, or video quality. But the procedure is much the same for creating discs in any of these formats. Here we'll use the VCD format.

3. CAPTURE YOUR VIDEO

You can convert video footage into digital format and transfer it onto your hard drive in a number of ways. One way is to digitize VHS or 8mm video footage using a video-capture card. (See our April Tune-Up feature, "Become a Digital Director," p. 202.) We used the Dazzle Digital Video Creator II. If you have a digital camcorder, you can import the digital data directly into your computer using the IEEE 1394 (FireWire) interface. Or you can capture new videos directly to your hard drive using a Web camera.

Before capturing your video, you'll need to choose a resolution and compression scheme. Capture devices typically offer default capture settings at "standard" resolutions, such as those laid out in step 2. If disk storage isn't a problem, consider digitizing at the highest-quality setting your equipment supports. (We used a DVD preset of 720 by 480 with MPEG-2 compression.) This approach gives you the flexibility to use the video at a higher quality later—if you invest in a DVD writer, for instance. It may even yield a better result

Capture software such as Dazzle's MovieStar typically provides preset recording options for video suitable for VCD, SVCD, or DVD.

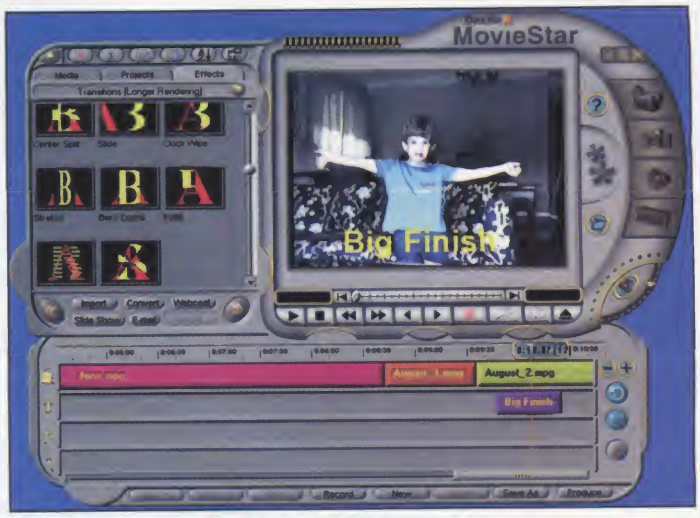
writing to CD now, because it gives your re-encoding software more information to work with.

You may also need to specify a bit rate at which to capture video, depending on your other selections. The VCD 2.0 standard calls for a fixed bit rate of 1,150kbps; other formats allow some flexibility. In theory at least, the higher the bit rate, the better the video quality.

TIP: If your digitizer uses a compression format other than MPEG-1 or MPEG-2, such as MJPEG, try to at least match the frame size to one of the standard settings, such as 352 by 240 or 720 by 480. This will make re-encoding your video later on easier.

4. EDIT THE VIDEO

Now is a good time to edit the video you captured. Chances are your video-capture or DV card came with editing software that will



Add text or other effects during editing.

at least suffice. If not, you can invest in any of several stand-alone editors. (For more information, refer to the previously mentioned Shopper's Guide in this issue, or to our September roundup of video-editing programs, "Movie Makers," p. 128.)

Even if you see no need to edit your video, you'll probably want to divide your clips into scenes, to separate the birthday party from the trip to the zoo, for instance. Most editing software also lets you add special effects, such as transitions between scenes.

TIP: It's a good idea to save your edited video at the same resolution you captured it. This preserves the video quality of your original capture and lets you save the edited clip more quickly.

5. ENCODE TO THE TARGET FORMAT

Unless you captured your video at the precise resolution and bit rate you chose for your target format, you'll need to re-encode your almost-finished video. The software that came with your video-capture board is probably up to the task, but video quality will vary depending on the software you use. We achieved excellent results from a freeware encoder that's been getting rave user ratings: TMPGEnc (short for Tsunami MPEG Encoder), available at ***www.tmpgenc.com/e_main.html.***

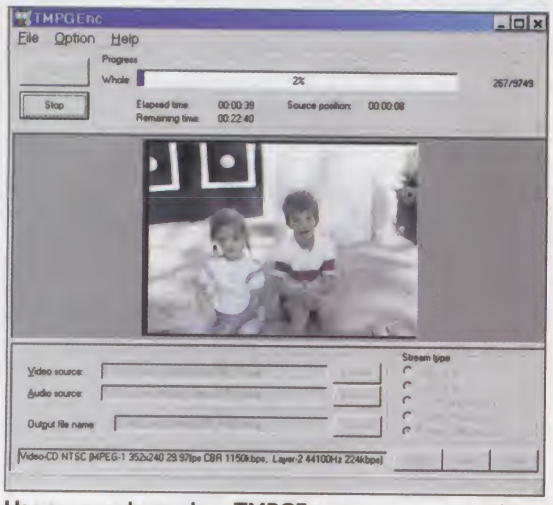
Using TMPGEnc is a snap. First, load your video by clicking on

DVD-PLAYER COMPATIBILITY

Although VCD and SVCD may not be household acronyms in the United States, they're recognized international standards with millions of users worldwide. Almost all stand-alone DVD players can play manufactured VCDs, and many DVD players also play manufactured SVCDs. On most DVD players, however, CD-R discs won't play reliably, because the dyes used in these discs often don't adequately reflect the player's laser light. User experience suggests CD-RW discs, which use different dyes, are easier for most DVD players to read. (For a compatibility chart assembled from the reports of users of various DVD players, see ***www.vcdhelp.com/dvdplayers.php.***)

To guarantee media compatibility, buy a DVD player that expressly supports CD-RW media. It need not be the most expensive model. We tested VCDs burned on CD-R and CD-RW media on an Apex 500W DVD player purchased at Wal-Mart for $98, and it was able to read every disc we tried. It was even able to play SXVCDs with video encoded at DVD rates.

the Browse button next to "Video source" and locating the file. Next, load the settings template for your target format—in our case, "VideoCD (NTSC)"—by clicking on the Load button at the bottom right of the window.



Use an encoder such as TMPGEnc to convert your video to your target format.

This template contains all the settings necessary to produce VCD-compliant video. Next, click on the Browse button next to "Output file name" to name the re-encoded file, then click on Start to begin the process.

Re-encoding is slow, even on a fast computer. It took us about a half hour to re-encode 5 minutes of DVD-quality video to VCD format on our 800MHz Pentium III test system.

After you re-encode your video, check it carefully. If it doesn't play back smoothly and clearly from your hard drive, it probably won't play well from a CD.

TIP: You may wish to divide long video segments into shorter clips before you encode. That way you can test one of the resulting files without waiting forever, and you can skip from segment to segment on your finished VCD.

6. CHOOSE YOUR MEDIA

When it comes to VCD compatibility, all CD-R and CD-RW media are not alike. If you care about viewing your VCDs on a stand-alone DVD player or letting others do so—or even letting others view your video masterpieces on older CD-ROM drives—you'll need to choose your output media with care.

Whether your discs will play in a given DVD player or computer system depends on two unrelated factors: the format of the information stored on the disc, and the physical makeup of the disc itself. Even if you choose VCD as your target format to maximize compatibility, you still have to make sure your friends and family members will be able to use the type of disc you provide. If possible, burn a simple video onto several brands of CD-RW or CD-R media (using CD-Rs of several different dye colors, if possible, such as gold, silver, blue, and green), then test each on the players in question.

TIP: To test-drive compatibility before you go to the trouble of digitizing and editing video, consider using a downloaded sample to burn your discs. VCDHelp *(www.vcdhelp.com)* includes free samples of all the standard formats, which can also be handy for testing your system's video-playback capabilities.

Get Moving

4 ESSENTIAL ZDNET DOWNLOADS

- **Gear Pro for Windows**
  Write Video CD and other files to CD-R.
- **iFilmEdit**
  Edit MPEG-1 video files.
- **I-Video CD Player**
  Play Video CD, MPEG, AVI, DAT, and MOV files.
- **NanoDVR**
  Record high-quality MPEG video on your computer.

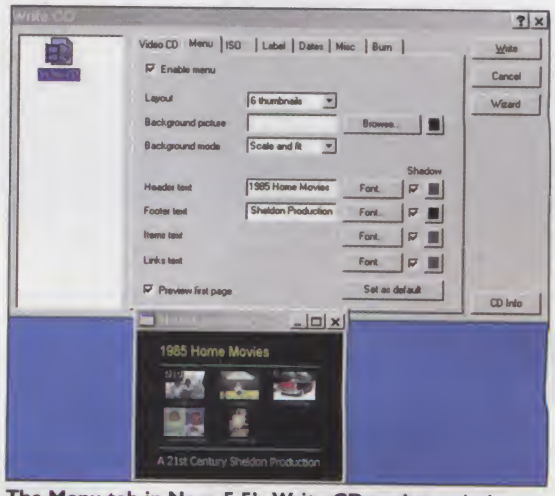
ZDNet DOWNLOAD THEM NOW FROM *computershopper.zdnet.com/downloads*

7. BURN THE VIDEO CD

Each VCD and SVCD disc must contain a specific set of directories and files. CD-writing software such as Ahead's Nero and Roxio's Video CD Creator takes care of these details for you. Simply start a VCD project and drag your video files (encoded in the appropriate format) to the project window, and the program will create all the necessary directories and files.

We chose Ahead's Nero 5.5 software because it supports both VCD and SVCD discs, in standard and nonstandard formats. (At this writing, Video CD Creator, part of Roxio's Easy CD Creator suite, would create only VCD 2.0 discs.)

Once you've dragged all your video files into the project window, select File > Write CD. The options window lets you add a menu to your VCD so the viewer can select from several clips—select the Menu tab, and then check the Enable Menu box. You can also set options such as the layout of the menu. When you're ready to write the CD, pop a blank into the burner and click on the Write button. ▼



The Menu tab in Nero 5.5's Write CD options window makes it easy to add a menu to your VCD.

A DIFFERENT SPIN

For more information on VCDs, start at VCDHelp *(www.vcdhelp.com)*. This handy site has information on all formats and offers downloadable samples you can burn yourself to test them out. It also has a forum for users seeking to discuss their problems and successes in creating VCDs.

Video CD Creator users should check out the VCD Stuff page at ***www.members.home.net/richa/vcdmain.htm*** for a detailed explanation of how to create VCD menus in that program (a process that's almost impossible to understand using the program documentation or wizard alone). Also check out the associated site ***www.pcphotovideo.com*** for some nitty-gritty suggestions on capturing video and improving the video quality of your VCDs. Also, Millennium Bug's SVCD Creation Guide ***(www.geocities.com/bug2kbug/svcdguide.htm)*** offers plenty of useful tips, such as how to create SVCDs with the same play time as VCDs.

For additional downloads, go to our Downloads Hub at
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- Dual Intel® 10/100 Ethernet Adapter
- Supermicro Tower 400W ATX Case
- 19" 1600x1280 .25 SVGA Monitor
- Logitech Keyboard and Wheel Mouse
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- Sound Pro AC97 3D Sound Card
- V.92 Zoom 56K Fax/Modem
- 10/100 Ethernet Network Card
- Enlight Tower or Desktop Case
- 17" 1280X1024 .27 SVGA Monitor
- Cambridge PC Works 2-Speakers set w/Subwoofer
- Logitech Keyboard and Wheel Mouse
- Microsoft Windows ME or 98SE
- Free Upgrade to Windows-XP Home Edition
- Microsoft Office-XP SB Edition
- Norton PC Anywhere 9.2
- 3 Years Parts, Lifetime Labor Warranty

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Enlight ATX Case, 300W Power Supply
266MHz Bus Speed Motherboard
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Built-in HDD/FDD RAID/100 Controller,
1 - 4x AGP, 5 - PCI Slots
Logitech Keyboard and Wheel Mouse

AMD Duron™800MHz	$249
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AMD Athlon™ 1.4GHz	$249
AMD Athlon™ 1.5GHz	$275

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AMD Athlon™ 1.5GHz	$299

GIGABYTE 7DXR $159

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AMD Athlon™ 1.0GHz	$239
AMD Athlon™ 1.4GHz	$286
AMD Athlon™ 1.5GHz	$310

ECS P6S5AT $69

SIS 630T Chipset, 133MHz Bus Speed, 5-PCI, 1-AMR, 1-4xAGP Slot, 2-184 pin Memory Slots, Award PnP BIOS, 2-USB Ports, Build-in IDE UDMA/100 and I/O Controller, ATX Form Factor.

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ASUS P4T $159

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Intel D850GBAL ..... add $29

Pentium®-4 1.5GHz	$289
Pentium®-4 1.7GHz	$359
Pentium®-4 1.8GHz	$419
Pentium®-4 2.0GHz	$699

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THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

Dear Alfred:

When I play music CDs, I can't hear sound from my speakers all the time. Would updated sound-card drivers help?

Jerry Washington

I doubt updated drivers will make a difference. Although your computer and sound card interpret music stored on your hard drive, it's your CD drive that processes music from audio CDs. (A few drives send digital data to your computer for processing, but they're the exception.)

Make sure the stereo analog connection between the CD drive and the sound card is properly seated at both ends. It's typically a small, round cable with plastic connectors at each end. If the problem persists, plug a headset into the CD drive's front-panel jack to confirm that the audio is being processed correctly. If everything checks out, the line channel that carries the CD audio to the sound card may be defective. You can work around the problem by patching the front-panel jack to the line-input connection on the back of your sound card.

DEEP-FRIED CHIPS

Dear Alfred:

My computer's processor constantly runs at 135 to 145 degrees Fahrenheit. If I play a graphics-intensive game such as Quake III Arena, the machine runs at about 155 F. Is this too hot? What can I do to make it run cooler, short of putting my computer in the refrigerator?

Russ Marshall

First, check the specs for your processor (and slot type, if applicable). Pentium models' operating-temperature limits range from 140 to 212 F, so you're probably running within the manufacturer's limits.

Still, heat is the number-one enemy of semiconductors, so longevity and reliable performance depend on keeping the temperature down. Consider building some ductwork to channel air directly to your CPU's heat sink, or better yet, switch to an active CPU cooler with its own attached fan. If you have a high-powered graphics adapter, consider adding a heat sink with a fan to its processor.

MASTER YOUR HARD DRIVE

Dear Alfred:

I've heard there's an undocumented DOS command to rewrite the hard drive's master boot record (MBR). What's the command, and why would you use it? ***Mohit Kakkar***

The command is FDISK /MBR, and you can execute it at a DOS prompt. Because you must be in DOS mode, this only applies to Windows 95, 98, and Me. The MBR is the first sector of the drive; it contains partition information and a small program that determines where to find boot files. Viruses that damage the MBR can make the drive unbootable. Running FDISK /MBR rewrites the MBR and may make the drive bootable.

You shouldn't run this command in some instances. If your drive uses a utility that lets your system use larger hard drives, this command could overwrite information required to boot the system. Also, if your system has a dual-boot configuration, FDISK /MBR may corrupt its settings. As with any operation that can make drastic changes to your hard drive, make sure you back up all critical files before you begin.▼

tip of the month

EXCEL-LENT POSSIBILITIES

In the August 2001 issue, I printed a question from a teacher about how to make changes on multiple Excel worksheets at one time. My response was that it was easier to use a program designed especially for grade records. Three readers told me about a trick that may solve the problem, and all are getting tipster's prize packages this month: Alan Shields, Jeff Jones, and Wesley Tam.

If you select more than one worksheet, a change in a cell on one sheet will be reflected on cells in that location on the other selected sheets. You can also insert and delete rows and columns on multiple worksheets.

To select more than one sheet, hold down the Ctrl key and click the tabs of the worksheets you want to use. If you want to select them all, right-click any tab and choose Select All Sheets.

This is a handy but dangerous tip. It works only if all your selected sheets are arranged the same way. If Suzy Smith's records are on row 12 in one sheet and row 13 in another, you can alter another student's records inadvertently. And because you can see only one sheet at a time, you'll be making changes you can't see. If you're careful to save your work, you'll be safe, but I still favor using a database program designed for this particular purpose.

Send us your favorite tip, and you could receive a tipster's prize package, including a coveted "Computer Cures" T-shirt (one size fits all), plus some other exciting items you can't get anywhere else.

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BUYING ADVISOR

by Asa Somers

A Notebook for Yours Truly

This time, our Buying Advisor searches for a low-cost notebook for himself.

WHEN YOU GIVE ADVICE for a living, it's hard not to believe your own hype. "Sure, I know what I'm talking about when it comes to buying a new computer," I like to think. But when my tried-and-true 233MHz MMX Pentium system went on a permanent hiatus, I faced the prospect of actually taking my own advice. I have a clear picture of the computer market, but when it comes to spending my own money, it's hard to pull the trigger.

Here's my scenario: I live in a cramped Manhattan apartment, so a desktop system isn't in the cards. I'm also a journalist, so I'm on a tight budget. I was looking to spend a maximum of $1,200 on a notebook PC.

Just before I sat down to write this column, Dell was offering a wonderful promotion: a free upgrade from a standard CD-ROM drive to DVD or CD-RW with the purchase of select desktops and notebooks. Now, that's a bargain. I configured an **Inspiron 2500** with an 800MHz Celeron CPU, a 14.1-inch TFT screen and a CD-RW drive for an incomparable $1,148.

The only problem was the Web site reported the promotion was to end that day, and it was already 11 p.m. Eastern time. Could this be a marketing ploy? Would the promotion actually continue the next day? And when the site said "that day," did it mean in Tonga, or a little closer to home? I decided to wait and find out what some local retail outlets had to offer.

The next day the promotion was replaced with a choice of a free scanner or printer, neither of which I needed. With a CD-RW drive, the system now cost $1,347, too steep for my budget. Time for me to roll out Plan B.

As a computer journalist, I have the advantage of seeing most of the systems in my price range firsthand, so I know which ones aren't for me. The very affordable **Toshiba Satellite 1800,** with its 13.3-inch screen, 8MB graphics adapter, and DVD-ROM drive, was a steal at $1,099. But being a touch-pad man, I can't tolerate that pointing-stick cursor control.

CHALLENGE

USER PROFILE

Asa Somers, Buying Advisor, New York City

COMPUTING NEEDS

Find a solid low-end notebook with a large TFT screen, touch-pad pointing device, and good keyboard for $1,200 or less. An included CD-RW drive would be a big plus.

I also looked at sub-$1,000 systems from Gateway, but they didn't offer enough bang for the buck, and configuring them the way I wanted took them out of my price range. The same was true of the **Sony VAIOs.** In fact, many notebook makers that do very well in the midrange and desktop-replacement markets aren't nearly as competitive at the low end.

HP Pavilion N5195

The **Fujitsu LifeBook E Series** is an exceptional system but is too expensive. Same with the **Acer TravelMates.** Anything starting at around $1,400 was simply too much computer for me. And I had no intention of forgoing the Windows OS for a Mac.

I did find a **Compaq Presario 1700** for $1,218. It featured an 800MHz Celeron, 128MB of RAM, a 13.3-inch screen, and a 24x CD-ROM drive, but upgrading to CD-RW cost a prohibitive $200. The lower-end **Presario 1200,** configured almost the same way, was only slightly less expensive.

A similarly equipped **WinBook J1** with only 64MB of RAM came in at a low $1,068. And some refurbished systems on the WinBook site were in the $199 and $299 range. They were generations-old 133MHz systems, but perfect for anyone looking for a disposable computer.

Next I checked the auctions at uBid, which deals mostly in factory-refurbished systems. I found plenty of great notebooks there, some at excellent prices. A 700MHz Pentium III-based **HP Pavilion N5195** caught my eye. I'd given a previous model of this system a favorable review several months back. It's solidly constructed, and has a great keyboard and dedicated audio-CD controls that work even when the system is powered down, along with some other outstanding features.

With a 15.1-inch display, built-in Ethernet and modem, a 20GB hard drive, and an 8x DVD-ROM drive, the Pavilion was more than enough computer for my needs. Its only shortcoming was its lack of a CD-RW drive, but I could conceivably handle that through a third-party external model. The only other issue was the meager 90-day warranty, which isn't for the faint of heart. But I'm young and foolish, so I'll take my chances.

SOLUTION

THE ADVISOR RECOMMENDS (AND BUYS!)

Too bad Dell pulled the plug on its excellent CD-RW promotion just before I could snap up an $1,148 **Inspiron 2500**. Some other systems presented favorable deals, including the $1,099 **Toshiba Satellite 1800** and $1,068 **WinBook J1**, but the uBid auctions were too tantalizing. In the end, a 700MHz Pentium III-based **HP Pavilion N5195** with a 15.1-inch screen, 20GB hard drive, and 8x DVD drive stole my heart for $1,098.

ZDNet Price It! 34815

For real-time pricing, go to priceit.zdnet.com and enter number.

I had seen a nearly identically configured system selling for $1,699 at a local retail chain with a slightly faster 850MHz processor, so I did the math and set my final bid at $1,100. I ended up winning the auction for $1,098! My nearly new computer was to arrive by ground transport (cost, around $50) in four to 10 days. ▼

If you want help making a smart buying decision, e-mail the Buying Advisor at ***buying_advisor@zdnet.com.***

For more tech tips, go to our Help Hub at computershopper.zdnet.com/help ZDNet

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Motherboards

Asus	A7V133	$129	Iwill	KA266R	$145
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Tyan	Thunder K7 Dual AMD!!			S2462NG	$409

Processors

AMD	1.0GHz	A1000BOX266	$119
AMD	1.2GHz	A1200BOX266	$125
AMD	1.4GHz	A1400BOX266	$139
AMD	1.2GHz	AHX1200AMS3C (for Dual MB)	$235

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ATI	Rage Fury 32MB AGP	100416237	$99
ATI	AIW 128PRO 32MB	100708089	$139
Hercules	3D Prophet II MX 400	4766048	$100
Hercules	3D Prophet III 64MB DDR	4766036	$416
Hercules	3D Prophet III 64MB W/KYRO II	4766036	$399
VisionTek	GeForce3 64MB 4X AGP	724040	$377

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Creative	56K PCI Voice/Data/Fax	DI5655	$35

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16x10x40	IDE	Pacific Digital U-30105	$112	$152
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16x10x40	IDE	Teac CDW516E	$138	$178
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HARD DRIVES

Maxtor

Formerly Quantum Drives

Capacity	Cache	RPM	Item Number	Price
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20.5GB	2MB	7200	QMP20500AS	$90
30.0GB	2MB	7200	QMP30000AS	$105
40.0GB	2MB	7200	QMP40000AS	$125
60.0GB	2MB	7200	QMP60000AS	$180
SCA & SCA ULTRA 160 Single Connector Attachment				
9.2GB	4MB	7200	XC309100SCA	$149
18.4GB	4MB	7200	XC318400SCA	$175
18.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW018J2	$209
36.7GB	4MB	7200	XC336700SCA	$325
36.7GB	8MB	10,000	KW036J4	$419
73.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW073J8	$785
ULTRA 160 SCSI (160 MB/sec)				
9.2GB	4MB	7200	XC309100LW	$149
18.4GB	4MB	7200	XC318400LW	$175
18.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW018L2	$209
36.7GB	4MB	7200	XC336700LW	$325
36.7GB	8MB	10,000	KW036L4	$419
73.4GB	8MB	10,000	KW073L8	$785

Maxtor

(dirtcheapdrives.com/max)

ULTRA ATA-100 IDE - 7200 RPMs				
20.0GB	2MB	7200	M5T020H2	$89
30.0GB	2MB	7200	M5T030H3	$105
40.0GB	2MB	7200	M5T040H4	$120
60.5GB	2MB	7200	M5T060H6	$180
ULTRA ATA-100 IDE - 5400 RPMs				
20.0GB	2MB	5400	4K020H1	$80
40.0GB	2MB	5400	4K040H2	$99
60.0GB	2MB	5400	4K060H3	$155
80.0GB	2MB	5400	4K080H4	$219
100.0GB	2MB	5400	4W100H6	$259
1394 External Hard Drive Kits				
40.0GB	2MB	5400	X01FWRA040	$239
80.0GB	2MB	5400	X01FWRA080	$329

IBM

(dirtcheapdrives.com/ibm)

ULTRA ATA-100 IDE				
20.0GB	2MB	7200	07N6652	$89
40.0GB	2MB	7200	07N6654	$115
60.0GB	2MB	7200	07N6655	$175
75.0GB	2MB	7200	07N4777	$259
Ultra 160 SCSI				
9.1GB	4MB	10,000	07N6360	$219
18.3GB	4MB	10,000	07N6350	$279
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	07N6340	$465
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	07N6300	$839
SCA & SCA Ultra 160				
9.1GB	4MB	10,000	07N6390	$219
18.3GB	4MB	10,000	07N6380	$279
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	07N6370	$465
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	07N6310	$839
Microdrives				
340MB	128K	12 ms	MD340A	$255
512MB	128K	12 ms	MD512A	$305
1.0GB	128K	12 ms	MD1GBA	$415

FUJITSU

(dirtcheapdrives.com/fuj)

Ultra 160 SCSI				
18.2GB	4MB	10,000	MAJ3182MP	$205
36.4GB	4MB	10,000	MAJ3364MP	$399
73.5GB	4MB	10,000	MAN3735MP	$809
Ultra SCA				
18.2GB	4MB	10,000	MAJ3182MC	$205
36.4GB	4MB	10,000	MAJ3364MC	$399
73.5GB	4MB	10,000	MAN3735MC	$809

HARD DRIVES

Seagate

(dirtcheapdrives.com/sea)

Capacity	Cache	RPM	Item Number	Price
ULTRA ATA/100 IDE				
20.4GB	512K	5400	ST320410A	$85
20.0GB	2MB	7200	ST320011A	$92
40.8GB	512K	5400	ST340810A	$105
40.0GB	2MB	7200	ST340016A	$119
60.0GB	512K	5400	ST360020A	$155
60.0GB	2MB	7200	ST360021A	$169
80.0GB	512K	5400	ST380020A	$219
80.0GB	2MB	7200	ST380021A	$235
ULTRA SCSI				
18.4GB	2MB	7200	ST318417N	$185
ULTRA Wide SCSI				
18.4GB	2MB	7200	ST318417W	$175
Ultra 160 SCSI (up to 160MB/sec)				
9.2GB	4MB	10,000	ST39205LW	$175
18.4GB	2MB	7200	ST318437LW	$175
18.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST318405LW	$205
18.4GB	4MB	15,000	ST318452LW	$329
36.7GB	2MB	7200	ST336737LW	$319
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	ST336705LW	$399
36.7GB	4MB	15,000	ST336752LW	$559
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST373405LW	$769
181.6GB	4MB	7200	ST1181677LW	$1419
181.6GB	16MB	7200	ST1181677LWV	$1469
SCA & SCA 160 (Single Connector Attachment)				
9.2GB	4MB	10,000	ST39205LC	$175
18.4GB	2MB	7200	ST318437LC	$175
18.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST318405LC	$205
18.4GB	4MB	15,000	ST318452LC	$329
36.7GB	2MB	7200	ST336737LC	$319
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	ST336705LC	$399
36.7GB	4MB	15,000	ST336752LC	$559
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST373405LC	$769
181.6GB	4MB	7200	ST1181677LC	$1419
181.6GB	16MB	7200	ST1181677LCV	$1469
FC-AL Fibre Channel 160 (Arbitrated Loop)				
36.7GB	4MB	10,000	ST336605FC	$429
73.4GB	4MB	10,000	ST373405FC	$779

WESTERN DIGITAL

(dirtcheapdrives.com/wd)

ULTRA ATA-100 IDE				
20.0GB	2MB	5400	WD200AB	$78
20.0GB	2MB	7200	WD200BB	$85
30.0GB	2MB	5400	WD300AB	$89
30.0GB	2MB	7200	WD300BB	$105
40.0GB	2MB	5400	WD400AB	$108
40.0GB	2MB	7200	WD400BB	$119
60.0GB	2MB	5400	WD600AB	$139
60.0GB	2MB	7200	WD600BB	$175
80.0GB	2MB	7200	WD800BB	$219
100.0GB	2MB	7200	WD1000BB	$275
1394 External Hard Drive Kits				
30.0GB	2MB	5400	WD300A001RN	$209
60.0GB	2MB	5400	WD600A001RN	$299
80.0GB	2MB	5400	WD800A001RN	$359
1394 Cards from Western Digital				
Type II CardBus Card			WDAD003RNW	$89
PCI Card			WDAD002RNW	$45

MicroSolutions

32X CD-ROM ask about sound!	(BACKPAC32X)	$129
20GB Hard Drive also for USB	(154015)	$195
30GB Hard Drive also for USB	(154030)	$219
20GB Hard Drive also for PC card	(153015)	$195
4x4x24 CD Rewritable	(BACKPAC4X24)	$175

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These drives offer cost effective solutions for upgrading your existing laptop. We also carry a large variety of top name brand notebooks & accessories. CALL.

Capacity	Height	RPM	Model	Price
TOSHIBA Hard Drives				
10.0GB	9.5mm	4200	MK1017GAP	$89
20.0GB	9.5mm	4200	MK2017GAP	$129
30.0GB	9.5mm	4200	MK3017GAP	$199
40.0GB	9.5mm	4200	MK4018GAP	$359
IBM Hard Drives				
5.0GB	9.5mm	4200	07N4391	$85
10.0GB	9.5mm	4200	07N4390	$95
20.0GB	9.5mm	4200	07N6713	$139
30.0GB	9.5mm	4200	07N6714	$199
48.0GB	9.5mm	5400	07N6718	$419
HITACHI Hard Drives				
10.0GB	9.5mm	4200	DK23BA10	$98
15.0GB	9.5mm	4200	DK23BA15	$109
20.0GB	9.5mm	4200	DK23BA20	$135

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2.2GB Removable Cartridge Drive

Prices incl. 1 free disk. Extra Disks (ORBDISK) $29
ORB USB (ORBUSB) / Internal IDE (ORBIDE) $174 / $139
Int. SCSI (ORBSCSI) / Ext. SCSI (ORBSCSIX) $140/ $159

OPTICAL DRIVES

MAXOPTIX 5.2GB

2.6GB, 1.3GB, 1GB, 650MB compatible, SCSI-2, 4MB buffer

Int. (T6-5200)/Ext. our case (T6-5200X) $1329/$1409
Maxoptix 5.2 Media 1-4/5-9/10+ $83/$80/$77

SONY 5.2GB

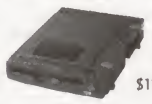
2.6GB, 1.3GB, 650MB r/w compatible, SCSI-2, 4MB buffer

Int. (SMOF551)/Ext. our case (SMOF551X) $1279/$1359
Sony 5.2 Media 1-4/5-9/10+ (SMAX5.2) $83/$80/$77

ZIP & JAZ DRIVES

iomega

100MB ZIP



Internal IDE for PC (ZIP100A) $59
Internal IDE for PC 5 pack (ZIP100A-5) $279
Internal IDE for PC 10 pack (ZIP100A-10) $545
External for PC parallel port (PPZIP100) $95
External for USB port (ZIP100USB) $79
100MB disks (ZIP100C) Qty 2-9/Qty 10+ $12/$10

250MB ZIP

External USB for PC or Mac (ZIP250USB) $139
External SCSI for PC or Mac (ZIP250) $139
Internal IDE (ZIP250A) $109
External for PC parallel port (PPZIP250) $139
250MB disks (ZIP250C) QTY 2-9/QTY 10+ $17/$15

2 GIG JAZ

Backwards compatible w/Jaz 1 Gig disks
10ms read, 12ms write, 5394rpm
Internal SCSI (JAZ2I) $235
External SCSI (JAZ2X) $299
1GB Disks (JAZC1GIGPC) Qty 2-4/5-9/10+ $80/$77/$75
2GB Disks (JAZC2GIGPC) Qty 2-4/5-9/10+ $85/$80/$77
JAZ ACCESSORIES
PCI Controller (JAZJETPCI) $89
PCMCIA Type II Adapter (JAZPCMCIA) $105
Parallel Adapter Jaz Traveller (JAZPARALLEL) $39

1394/FIREWIRE

1394 PCMCIA CardBus (70HTL00040) **$85**
1394 USB/PCI Board (70HTL00060) **$115**
1394 Hub (70HTL00030) **$85**
1394 Repeater (70HTL00020) **$45**
15 Ft. Cable: ***6pin to 4pin / 6pin to 6pin***
(70CAB13943) / (70CAB13942) **$15/$15**

1394 3.5" External Hard Drives w/Case (7200)

20 GB	FW20GB72	**$209**	30 GB	FW30GB72	**$229**
40 GB	FW40GB72	**$259**	60 GB	FW60GB72	**$299**
80 GB	FW80GB72	**$345**	100GB	FW100GB72	**$435**

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SONY

We include 5.25" mounting hardware with Seagate DAT!

4-8Gig	DDS-2 DAT, 90MB/min, SDT7000AI	$419 $10 (DAT120M)
12-24Gig	DDS-3 DAT, 144MB/min, SDT9000AI	$565 $20 (DAT125M)
20-40Gig	DDS-4 DAT, 288MB/min, SDT11000AI	$819 $33 (DAT150M)
160-320Gig	DDS-4 DATloader, 840MB/min, TSL-S11000	$2745 $33 (DAT150M)

SONY AIT Tape Drives

25-50GB	AIT Internal	(SDX-400CI)	**$1009**
25-50GB	AIT External	(SDX-S400C)	**$1249**
50-100GB	AIT-2 Internal	(SDX-500CI)	**$2319**
50-100GB	AIT-2 External	(SDX-S500C)	**$2529**

35GB AIT Media (SDX135C) 1-4/5/9/10-49/50+ **$85/$83/$81/$79**

50GB AIT Media (SDX250C) 1-4/5/9/10-49/50+ **$110/$106/$102/$98**

Quantum.

Get a DLT4 tape for only $65 when purchased with drive

40-80Gig	DLT, 12MB/sec (compressed), DLT8000	$2629 $65 (DLT4)
	External, our case, DLT8000X	$2749 $65 (DLT4)
	External, Quantum case, DLT8000QX	**$2829** $65 (DLT4)
40-80Gig	DLT1, 6MB/sec (compressed), BH1AA-YF	$1209 $65 (DLT4)
	External, our case, BH1AA-YFX	$1329 $65 (DLT4)
	External, Quantum case, BH1BA-YF	**$1439** $65 (DLT4)

DLT MEDIA SALE	**1-4**	**5-9**	**10-49**	**50+**
DLTIII 10-20GB (DLT3)	$34	$33	$32	$31
DLTIII XT 15-30GB (DLT3XT)	$37	$36	$35	$34
DLTIV 20-40GB (DLT4)	$73	$70	$67	$65
DLT Cleaning tape (DLTCLEAN)	$39	$37	$35	$33

Seagate

• Includes 1 FREE tape, cable, manual and Win/NTWS backup software

Minicartridge

ATAPI (IDE)	*Int.*		*Extra Tapes*
TR4 4-8Gig (STT28000A)	**$205**		**$25**(TR4)
TR5 10-20Gig (STT220000A)	**$285**		**$35**(TR5)
SCSI	*Int.*	*Ext.*	*Extra Tapes*
TR4 4-8Gig (STT28000N)	**$249**	**$309**	**$25**(TR4)

SCSI RCVT Includes NT & Netware server software only. Features hardware data compression.

TR4 4-8Gig (STT28000NC)	**$349**	**$409**	**$25**(TR4)
TR5 10-20Gig (STT220000N)	**$449**	**$509**	**$35**(TR5)

TANDBERG DATA

Internals			
12-24GB	SLR24, 8.6 GB/hr, (6239EI)	$809	$45 (431842)
20-40GB	SLR7, 21.6 GB/hr, (6621EI)	$829	$50 (432187)
30-60GB	SLR60, 28.8 GB/hr, (6561EI)	$1189	$64 (432188)
50-100GB	SLR100, 36 GB/hr, (6422EI)	$2119	$81 (431891)
Externals			
12-24GB	SLR24, 8.6 GB/hr, (6395UE)	$929	$45 (431842)
20-40GB	SLR7, 21.6 GB/hr, (6622UE)	$1001	$50 (432187)
30-60GB	SLR60, 28.8 GB/hr, (6562UE)	$1379	$64 (432188)
50-100GB	SLR100, 36 GB/hr, (6423UE)	$2299	$81 (431891)

HEWLETT® PACKARD

We include 5.25" mounting hardware with Seagate DAT!

4-8Gig	DDS-2, 60MB/min, C1599AI	$509 $10 (DAT120M)
12-24Gig	DDS-3, 120MB/min, C1554AI	$695 $20 (DAT125M)
72-144Gig	DDS-3, 120MB/min, C5648A	$1649 $20 (DAT125M)

Seagate

We include 5.25" mounting hardware with Seagate DAT!

4Gig	Mini 30MB/min,STT28000N	$249 $25 (TR4)
4-8Gig	Mini 60MB/min,STT28000NC	$349 $25 (TR4)
4-8Gig	DDS-2 DAT 66MB/min, STD28000RFT	$639 $10 (DAT120M)
12-24Gig	DDS-3 DAT 132MB/min, STD224000N	$645 $10 (DAT120M)
20-40Gig	DDS-4 DAT 330MB/min, STD2401LW	$929 $27 (DAT150M)
240Gig	DDS-4 DAT autoloader, STDL42401LW	$2245 $27 (DAT150M)
100-200Gig	LTO Viper 1.92GB/min, STU42001LWK	$5109 $155 (STUM200)

We have a variety of power backup solutions. Our customer service reps are glad to assist you. Call or visit our website under the "Power Backups" listing.

DRIVE CASES

DRIVE CASE:	**SCSI TYPE:** Ultra	UltraWide	Ultra 160
3.5" w/ closed, 1", & 1.6" open face plates	**$49** (3.5CASEC)	**$59** (3.5CASECW)	**$69*** (3.5CASE160)
5.25" w/ closed, 1", 1.6", & CD face plates	**$49** (HHCASET)	**$59** (HHCASETW)	**$75*** (HHCASET160)
Holds 2 half height or 1 full height drive.	**$69** (FHCASE)	**$95** (FHCASEW)	**$109*** (FHCASE160)
Dual 3.5" drive model Takes two 3.5" drives	**$69** (DUAL3.5CASE)	**$89** (DUAL3.5CW)	**$99*** (DUAL3.5C160)
Holds 4 half height or 2 full height drives.	**$99** (DUALCASET)	**$129** (DUALCASETW)	**$139*** (DUALCASE160)
Holds 8 half height or 4 full height drives.	**$175** (TOWERCASET)	**$219** (TOWERCASETW)	**$239*** (TOWERCSE160)
Holds 14 half height or 6 full height drives.	**$385** (14BAYCASE)	**$479** (14BAYCASEFW)	**$495*** (14BAYCSE160)
Holds 18 half height or 8 full height drives.	**$585** (18BAYCASE)	**$689** (18BAYCASEFW)	**$699*** (18BAYCSE160)
Holds 20 half height or 10 full height drives.	**$619** (20BAYCASE)	**$739** (20BAYCASEFW)	**$755*** (20BAYCSE160)

* *Also compatible with Ultra-2 SCSI*

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www.dirtcheapdrives.com/cases

Seagate External USB 4GB-8GB Tape Drive #STT681U-R $299

Seagate External USB 10GB-20GB Tape Drive #STT6201U-R $339

Need a custom configuration? We are the #1 US supplier for CD and DVD Recorders, ReWriters, Media, Towers, Duplicators, Printers, and Supplies. Call us with your needs!!

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Simple Back-up v.2.2 (VDKCXPR0004)	$29
Back-up Exec Desktop v.4.5 (VDKCXPR0006)	$55
Back-up Exec Desktop Pro v.4.5 (VDKCXPR0008)	$89
Back-up Exec NT/2000 Remote Agent Netware Single Pack v.8.5 (SBENTNW0019)	$169
Back-up Exec For NetWare/Single Server (SBENWSE0016)	$465
Back-up Exec For NT/2000 Server Edition v.8.5 (SBENTSR0038)	$499
Back-up Exec For NT/2000 Advanced Server Edition v.8.5 (SBENTAS0043)	$799
Back-up Exec For NetWare Multi-Server Edition v.8.5 (SBENWME0012)	$913
Back-up Exec For NT/2000 SAN Shared Storage Option v.8.5 (SBENTSS0024)	$1069

We now carry a large variety of software including: gaming software, multimedia software, business software and more! CALL US!

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4x4x6 CD-RW – PC or Mac (CDW54EUSB) **$165**
Master CD with this complete kit. Includes mastering software & drive in high quality external USB case.

2.2GB Orb (ORBUSB) **$174**
Revolutionary removable media storage by Castlewood Systems holds 2.2GB of uncompressed storage capacity. Includes a 2.2GB cartridge.

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Adapter allows you to attach any SCSI device to the USB port.

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Seagate 10GB native, 20GB compressed tape backup. Uses TR5 tapes - special - only $34 when purchased with this drive - any qty.

1394 USB/PCI Board (70HTL00060) **$115**
2 1394 ports & 2 USB external ports for plug and play peripherals.

Floppy Drive (USBFLOPPY) **$85**
USB for iMac. Read/write Mac & PC formats. iMac blue case.

USB 3.5" External Hard Drives w/Case (5400):

20 GB	USB20GB	**$179** /	30 GB	USB30GB	**$195**
40 GB	USB40GB	**$215** /	60 GB	USB60GB	**$259**
80 GB	USB80GB	**$329** /	100 GB	USB100GB	**$359**

2.5" Laptop Hard Drives / External Kits:
10 GB (USB10GB2.5) **$185** / 20 GB (USB20GB2.5) **$225**

Para Llamadas en Espanol: 1-800-473-0960

CONTROLLERS

adaptec

		BARE	/ KIT
1890600	Fireconnect 4300 KIT PCI 1394-FireWire Adapter		$72
1914500	Digital Video Editing Kit AFW4300DVKIT		$75
A2906EKIT	PCI 32 Bit SCSI (For PC or Mac)		$55
T1350	EPP Parallel to SCSI Adapter		$69
T1460D2KIT	PCMCIA type 2, 3, or 4 to SCSI		$119
T1480A	CardBus to Ultra SCSI		$169
ARO1130U2	RAIDPORT II Ultra-2 RAID		$265
A19160	Ultra 160 SCSI	$149	$219
A29160	Ultra 160 SCSI 64 bit	$205	$289
A39160	Ultra 160 SCSI 64 bit PCI, 2 channel		$325
A29160N	Ultra 160 SCSI 32 bit PCI		$279
A29160LP	Ultra 160 SCSI 64 bit MD2 low profile	$219	$299
APD29160MAC	Ultra 160 SCSI controller for Macintosh		$269
APD39160MAC	Ultra 160 SCSI controller for Macintosh	FAST!	$395
1891200	Ultra ATA/100 PCI 2-channel RAID		$92
1891300	Ultra ATA/100 PCI 4-channel RAID		$325
The Adaptec RAID Lineup			
1873700	Ultra 160 SCSI RAID w/32MB SDRAM		$409
1917200	As 2100S with 2 channels, 64 bit		$709
1917400	As 2100S with 4 channels, 64 bit		$1009
ABM100KIT	Battery backed module for 3000S series RAID controllers		$229
AMM232KIT	32MB ECC SO-DIMM for 3000S series RAID controllers		$109
AMM264KIT	64MB ECC SO-DIMM for 3000S series RAID controllers		$169

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• Hardware RAID 1 (mirroring) works with most operating systems.
• Jumperless design, 100% data redundancy, 4 drive support
• DupliDisk II (DPDIIPCI) **$215**
DUPLIDISK2 **$239** No slot version (DPD2-NOSLOT) **$229**

Tekram

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DC315U	32 Bit PCI SCSI controller - no bios	$25
DC395U	32 Bit PCI Ultra SCSI controller	$49
DC395UW	32 Bit PCI Ultra Wide SCSI controller	$75
DC390U2	32 Bit PCI Ultra-2 SCSI controller	$129
DC390U2W	32 Bit PCI Ultra-2 SCSI Dual Channel controller	$139
DC390U3W	1 Ultra 160 Channel & 1 Ultra Wide channel kit	$189

PROMISE TECHNOLOGY, INC.

ULTRA66	PCI, Supports Ultra-66 IDE drives	$23
ULTRA100TX2	PCI, Supports Ultra ATA-100 drives	$37
FASTTRAK66	PCI, Supports Ultra ATA-66 IDE drives	$59
FASTTRAK100TX2	PCI, Supports ULTRA ATA-100 RAID 0+1	$89
SUPERTRAK66	PCI, 4-Channel Ultra ATA-66 RAID Card	$239
SUPERTRAK100	PCI, 6-Channel Ultra ATA-66 RAID Card	$319

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Keep your data secure by turning any 3½" drive into a removable.

DATAPORT™ SYSTEM INCLUDES:

1. Frame – Installs into your 5¼" drive bay

2. Cartridge – Holds your internal drive allowing it to slip in and out of the bay on the installed frame

DATAPORT V

High quality construction. Gold plated connections. Features built in cooling fan, SCSI ID switch. Metal frame construction. Plastic cartridge with metal top and bottom covers.

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Includes 1 frame, and 1 cartridge		
IDE 66 w/plastic cartridge (DP2200A66)	$79	N/A
IDE 66 w/ metal cartridge (DP2200AM66)	$87	$96
Ultra Wide SCSI (DP2200UW)	$105	N/A
EXTRA CARTRIDGE		
Plastic IDE 66 (DPACART66)	$42	N/A
Metal IDE 66 (DPACARTM66)	$50	$60
Ultra Wide SCSI (DPUWCART)	$61	N/A
EXTRA FRAME		
IDE 66 (DPAFRAME66)	$44	
Ultra Wide SCSI (DPUWFRAMEA)	$51	

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Fits all removable cartridges. Great for safe transportation and storage once the cartridge is removed.

Professional Aluminum Case (DPCASEM) **$35**

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CD ROM DRIVES

Speed	Brand	Model	ms	Buffer	Int	Ext
SCSI CD ROM						
32X	Teac	CD532S	85	128K	$72	$132
40X	NEC	CDR3010	85	256K	$67	$127
40X	Plextor	PX40TS (TRAY)	85	512K	$87	$147
WIDE SCSI CD ROM						
40X	Plextor	PX40TSUW	85	512K	$99	$189
						PARALLEL PORT
IDE CD ROM						
40X	Teac	CD540E	85	128K	$43	$98
48X	Mitsumi	CRMCFX48X	65	256K	$39	$95
52X	Creative	SBCD52	100	256K	$37	$95
52X	Sony	CDU5211	85	256K	$39	$95
56X	Acer	CD656A	85	128K	$39	$95

CD ROM ACCESSORIES

Buy a CD drive and sound card and get a FREE audio cable!

Sound Blaster Live MP3+ 5.1 (SB006003002)	$89
Sound Blaster Live X-Gamer 5.1 (SB006003001)	$89
Sound Blaster 512 (SBPCI512)	$65
IDE CD ROM case for parallel printer port (PPCASECD)	$55
IDE CD ROM case for PCMCIA port (PCMCIACD)	$105
CD Driver software for Mac (RAPIDPD) **Price Reduction!**	**$5**
CD Caddies (CDCADDY) *5-19/20+*	$5/$4

FIREWIRE / USB EXTERNAL CASES

FireWire CD/CD-RW IDE 5.25" Case (FIREWIRECD)	$119
FireWire Hard Drive IDE 3.5" Case (FIREWIREHD)	$119
USB CD/CD-RW IDE 5.25" Case (USBCASE)	$89
USB Hard Drive IDE 3.5" Case (USBCASE3.5)	$85
USB Hard Drive IDE 2.5" Case (USBCASE2.5)	$85

CD-RW DRIVES

IDE CD-RW Drives Call for free software & media-with-drive deals

Teac	16x10x40 IDE	(CDW516EKIT)	$135
Sony	16x10x40 IDE	(CRX168B/A1)	$149
HP	16x10x40 IDE	(C9627A)	$155
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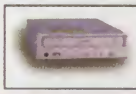

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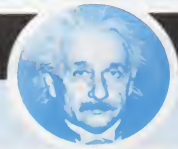

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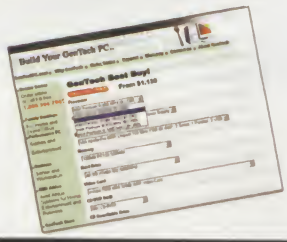

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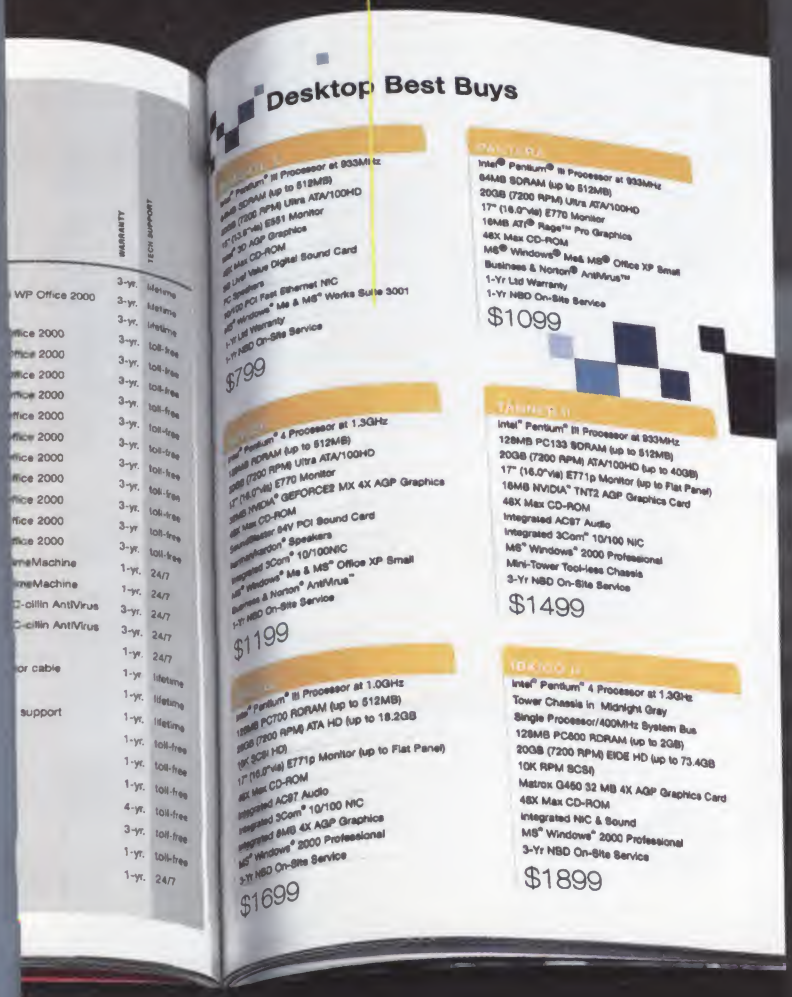

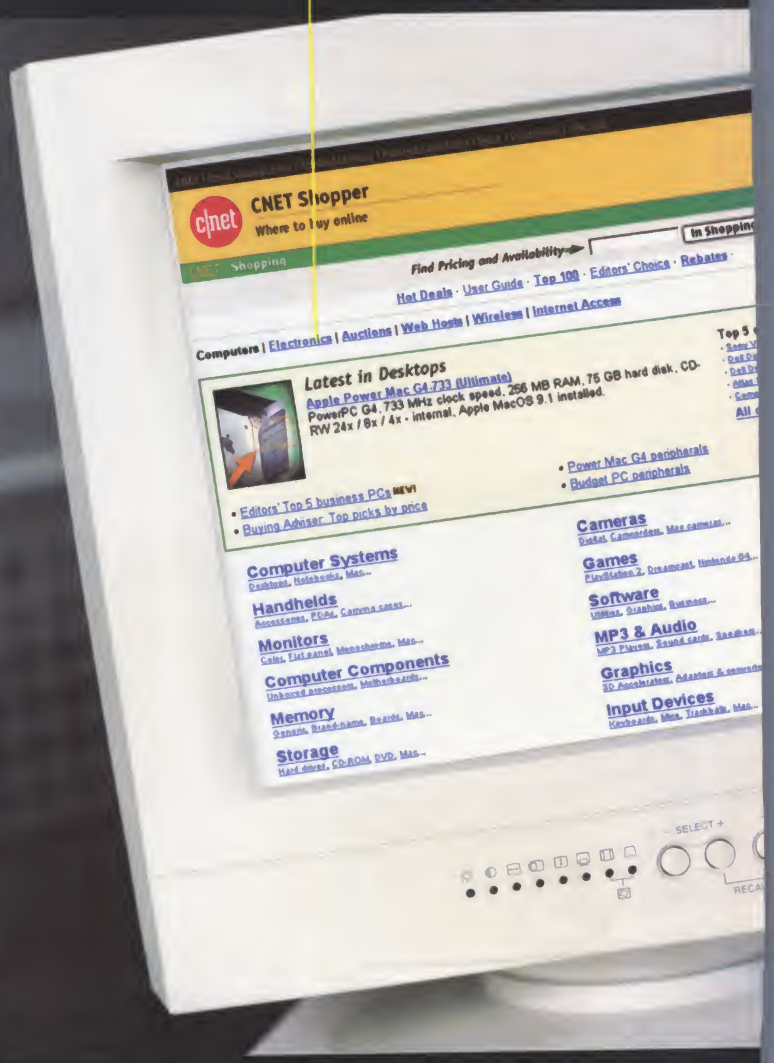

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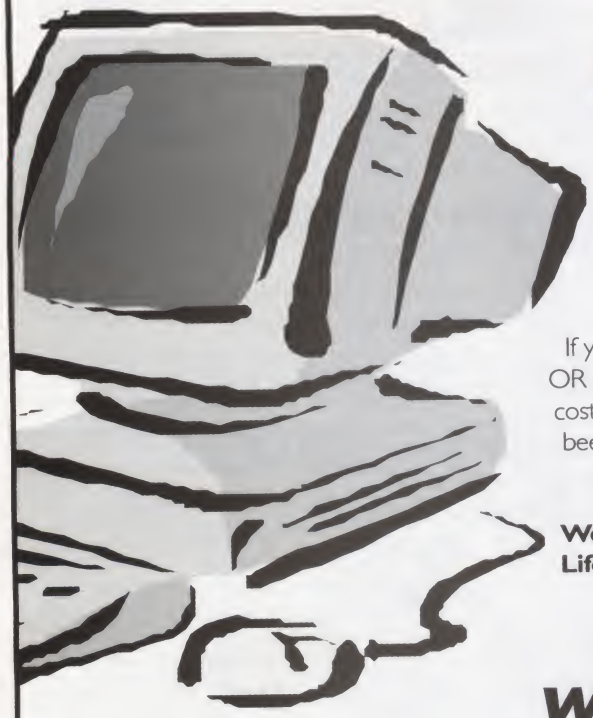

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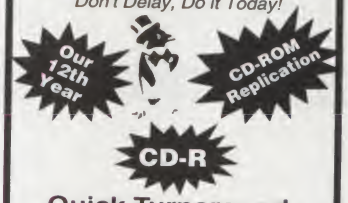

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$799.95 ITEM s1300414

SKU	MODEL	RESOLUTION	OPTICAL ZOOM	DIGITAL ZOOM	VIEW FINDER	LCD	MEMORY	PRICE
s1107005	FinePix 2400	Zoom 2.1 Megapixel	3x	2.5x	Yes	TFT active Matrix 1.6" color	8MB SmartMedia	$299.00
s1361673	FinePix 2800	Zoom 2.4Megapixel	3x	3.75x	Yes	TFT active Matrix 2" color	16MB SmartMedia	$499.00
s1123195	FinePix 4800	Zoom 2.4 Megapixel	3x	3.75x	Yes	TFT active Matrix 2" color	16MB SmartMedia	$599.00
s1108246	FinePix 4900	Zoom 2.4 Megapixel	6x	3.75x	Yes	TFT active Matrix 2" color	16MB SmartMedia	$799.00

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s1110121	DWL-650 11Mbps Wireless PC Card	$99.95
s1117063	DWL-120 11Mbps USB Wireless LAN adapter	$99.95
s1110120	DWL-500 11Mbps Wireless LAN PCI adapter	$119.95
s1110119	DWL-1000AP 11Mbps Wireless LAN Access Point	$219.95
s1107044	DI-704 Cable/DSL Router with 4-Port Switch	$99.95
s1282221	DP-313 11Mbps Wireless Print Server	$219.95

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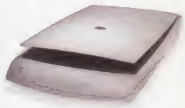

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s1346719	DeskJet 940C Printer	$149.00
s1367157	PSC 950 Multifunciton Printer	$399.00
s1100060	PhotoSmart P1000 Photo Printer	$199.00
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s1116505	HL-1650 Laser Printer	$599.95
s1284161	IntelliFAX 775 Plain Paper Fax	$99.95
s1340381	IntelliFAX 2800 Laser Fax	$279.95*
s1367501	MFC-4800 Color Multifunction Printer	$299.95*
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ABVH6T	FCPGA 1	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$83
ABKT7E	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$91
ABKT7	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$97
ABKT7A	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$103
ABKT7-RAID	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$112
ABSL6	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$114
ABSA6R	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$114
ABBX133-RAID	FCPGA 1	5	1	1	3/168	ATX	$119
ABST6-RAID	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$119
ABSE6	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$124
ABKT7A-RAID	SOCKET A	6	1	1	3/168	ATX	$127
ABKG7-LITE	SOCKET A	6		1	2/DDR	ATX	$127
ABKG7	SOCKET A	6		1	4/DDR	ATX	$134
ABVP6	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$137
ABBL7	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$139
ABBW7	P4(SKT 423)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$139
ABTH7-RAID	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$159
ABBW7-RAID	P4(SKT 423)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$164
ABTH7II	P4(SKT 478)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$164
ABBL7-RAID	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$166
ABKG7-RAID	SOCKET A	6		1	4/DDR	ATX	$169
ABTH7II-RAID	P4(SKT 478)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$197

ASUS www.asus.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
ASA7V-E-WOA	SOCKET A	6		1+AMR	2/168	MATX	$76
ASCUV4X-C	FCPGA 1	5		1+AMR	2/168	ATX	$79
ASA7S-VM	SOCKET A	4			2/168	MATX	$89
ASTUV4X-WOA	FCPGA 1/2	6		1	3/168	ATX	$89
ASTUV4X-WA	FCPGA 1/2	6		1	3/168	ATX	$94
ASCUV4X	FCPGA 1	5	1	1	3/168	ATX	$100
ASCUSL2-C	FCPGA 1	6		1+2CNR	3/168	ATX	$102
ASCUV4X-V	FCPGA 1	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$107
ASTUSL2-C	FCPGA 1/2	6		1+2CNR	3/168	ATX	$127
ASA7V133	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$112
ASA7PRO	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$122
ASCUSL2-CBP	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$122
ASA7V-WOA	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$129
ASA7A266	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	2DDR/168	ATX	$129
ASCUV4X-D	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$149
ASP4B	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$152
ASA7M266	SOCKET A	4		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$157
ASP4T	P4(SKT 423)	5		1	4/RIMM	ATX	$167
ASCUV266	FCPGA 1	5		1+ACR	3/DDR	ATX	$224
ASCUV4X-DLS	DUAL 370	5		1	4/168	ATX	$309
ASCUR-DLS	DUAL 370	7		ASMS	4/168	ATX	$669

intel www.intel.com

IND815EEA2L	FCPGA 1	5	LAN		3/168	ATX	$116
IND850GBC	P4(SKT 423)	5		1	4/RIMM	ATX	$149
IND850GBCAL	P4(SKT 423)	5	LAN	1	4/RIMM	ATX	$172

MSI www.msicomputer.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
MICKM133A	SOCKET A	3		1+CNR	2/168	MATX	$82
MICK7TTURBOLTD	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$102
MIC815EPRO	FCPGA 1	6		CNR	4/168	ATX	$102
MICK7TTURBO-R	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	3/168	ATX	$112
MIC815EPPROR	FCPGA 1	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$115
MICPRO266MSTR	FCPGA 1	5		1+CNR	3DDR/168	ATX	$117
MICK7T266PRO	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	3/DDR	ATX	$117
MICPR266MSTR-R	FCPGA 1	5		1+CNR	3DDR/168	ATX	$127
MICK7MASTER	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	2/DDR	ATX	$132
MIC850PRO	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$144
MICK7TMASTER	SOCKET A	6		1+CNR	4/168	ATX	$244
MICK7MASTER-S	SOCKET A	5		1+CNR	2/DDR	ATX	$274

GIGA-BYTE www.giga-byte.com

SKU	CPU	PCI	ISA	AGP	MEM	STYLE	PRICE
GBGA-7IXE4	SOCKET A	5	2	1	3/168	ATX	$64
GBGA-7IXE	SLOT A	5	2	1	3/168	ATX	$77
GBGA-7DXC	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$82
GBGA-7ZX-1R5	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$97
GBGA-7ZX-1	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$97
GBGA-7ZX5A	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$102
GBGA-7ZXR5	SOCKET A	5	1	1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$107
GBGA-7ZXR-R3	SOCKET A	6		1+AMR	3/168	ATX	$127
GBGA-7DX	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	2/DDR	ATX	$144
GBGA-8IDX	P4(SKT 478)	6		1	3/168	ATX	$147
GBGA-8IDXH	P4(SKT 478)	6	LAN	1	3/168	ATX	$157
GBGA-8TXC	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$159
GBGA-7DXR	SOCKET A	5		1+AMR	3/DDR	ATX	$159
GBGA-8TX	P4(SKT 423)	5		1+CNR	4/RIMM	ATX	$172

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intel www.intel.com

INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	667MHZ	128K	$39
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	700MHZ	128K	$42
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	733MHZ	128K	$44
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	766MHZ	128K	$46
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	800MHZ	128K	$53
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	850MHZ	128K	$57
INTEL	CELERON-A FCPGA	900MHZ	128K	$62
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	667MHZ	256K FCPGA	$114
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	700MHZ	256K FCPGA	$116
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	733MHZ	256K FCPGA	$120
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	750MHZ	256K FCPGA	$125
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	800MHZ	256K FCPGA	$127
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	800MHZ	256K FCPGA	$127
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	850MHZ	256K FCPGA	$132
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	866MHZ	256K FCPGA	$142
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	933MHZ	256K FCPGA	$157
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	1000MHZ	256K FCPGA	$187
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	1100MHZ	256K FCPGA	$259
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	1200MHZ	256K FCPGA	$279
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	750MHZ	256K SECC	$92
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	800MHZ	256K SECC	$127
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	800MHZ	256K SECC	$129
INTEL	PENTIUM III 100MHZ BUS	850MHZ	256K SECC	$137
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	866MHZ	256K SECC	$139
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	933MHZ	256K SECC	$177
INTEL	PENTIUM III 133MHZ BUS	1000MHZ	256K SECC	$264
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1400MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$142
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1500MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$144
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1700MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$202
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1700MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$209
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1800MHZ	256K SOCKET423	$264
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	1900MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$402
INTEL	PENTIUM 4 400MHZ BUS	2000MHZ	256K SOCKET478	$617

AMD www.amd.com

AMD	K6 II W/3D NOW	100 MHZ BUS	P450MHZ	$29
AMD	K6 II W/3D NOW	100 MHZ BUS	P500MZ	$30
AMD	K6 II W/3D NOW	100 MHZ BUS	P550MHZ	$39
AMD	DURON	200 MHZ BUS	P700MHZ	$34
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AMD	DURON	200 MHZ BUS	P800MHZ	$43
AMD	DURON	200 MHZ BUS	P850MHZ	$44
AMD	DURON	200 MHZ BUS	P900MHZ	$55
AMD	DURON	200 MHZ BUS	P950MHZ	$56
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P850MHZ	$59
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P900MHZ	$59
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P950MHZ	$62
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P1000MHZ	$84
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	266 MHZ BUS	P1000MHZ	$76
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AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	266 MHZ BUS	P1133MHZ	$91
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P1200MHZ	$99
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	266 MHZ BUS	P1200MHZ	$96
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P1300MHZ	$107
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	266 MHZ BUS	P1333MHZ	$104
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	200 MHZ BUS	P1400MHZ	$114
AMD	K7 SOCKET A TBIRD	266 MHZ BUS	P1400MHZ	$112
AMD	SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	P1000MHZ	$154
AMD	SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	P1200MHZ	$162
AMD	SOCKET A PALOMINO	266 MHZ BUS	P1400MHZ	$229

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EDIMAX NETWORKING PRODUCTS www.edimax.com

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EDEN5200PXA	ETHERNET RJ45/10BT/BNC/AUI PCI FULL DUPLEX	$18
EDEN9130	ETHERNET RJ45 10/100 PCI	$24
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MEMORY

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16MB	4X32 EDO	60NS	$8
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64MB	16X32 EDO	60NS	$23
128MB	32X32 EDO	60NS	$107

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64MB	8X72 (buffered)	60NS 3.3VOLT ECC	$51
128MB	16X64	60NS 3.3VOLT	$157
128MB	16X72 (unbuffered)	60NS 3.3VOLT ECC	$177
128MB	16X72 (buffered)	60NS 3.3VOLT ECC	$157
256MB	32X72 (buffered)	60NS 3.3VOLT ECC	$252

168-PIN LONG DIMMS SDRAM (66MHz)

32MB	4X64	10NS	$8
64MB	8X64	10NS	$11
128MB	16X64	10NS	$21

168-PIN SDRAM PC100/133/150

32MB	4X64	8NS	$7
64MB	8X64	8NS	$9
64MB PC133	8X64	7.5NS	$9
64MB	8X72	8NS	$11
128MB	16X64	8NS	$15
128MB PC133	16X64	7.5NS	$15
128MB PC150	16X64	7NS	$18
128MB	16X72	8NS	$17
128MB PC133	16X72	7.5NS	$19
256MB	32X64	8NS	$25
256MB PC133	32X64	7.5NS	$25
256MB PC150	32X64	7NS	$34
256MB	32X72	8NS	$31
256MB PC133	32X72	7.5NS	$31
512MB	64X72	8NS	$72
512MB PC133	64X64	7.5NS	$52
512MB PC133	64X72	7.5NS	$77
1024MB PC133	128X72	7.5NS	$244

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128MB	16X64	200MHZ	$21
128MB	16X64	266MHZ	$21
128MB	16X72	200MHZ	$24
128MB	16X72	266MHZ	$24
256MB	32X64	200MHZ	$36
256MB	32X64	266MHZ	$36
256MB	32X72	200MHZ	$41
256MB	32X72	266MHZ	$41
512MB	64X72	266MHZ	$159

CORSAIR www.corsairmicro.com

PC100/133/150

CM654S128A-BX2	128MB	16X64	8NS	$29
CM654S128A-133C2	128MB PC133	16X64 CAS2	7.5NS	$31
CM654S128A-150C2	128MB PC150	16X64 CAS2	7NS	$32
CM734S128A-BX2	128MB	16X72	8NS	$32
CM734S128-133	128MB PC133	16X72	7.5NS	$38
CM654S256-BX2	256MB	32X64	8NS	$49
CM654S256-133C2	256MB PC133	32X64 CAS2	7.5NS	$51
CM654S256-150C2	256MB PC150	32X64 CAS2	7NS	$52
CM724S256-133	256MB PC133	32X72	7.5NS	$58
CM724S256-BX2	256MB	32X72	8NS	$58
CM744S512-133	512MB PC133	64X72	7.5NS	$279
CM744S1024-133	1024MB PC133	128X72	7.5NS	$349

GX CHIPSETS

CM734S128A-GX	128MB	16X72	8NS	$31
CM724S256-GX2	256MB	32X72	8NS	$56

RAMBUS

CM616DR128-800	128MB	RDRAM	800MHZ	$52
CM618DR128-800	128MB	RDRAM	800MHZ	$59
CM616DR256-800	256MB	RDRAM	800MHZ	$119
CM618DR256-800	256MB	RDRAM	800MHZ	$127

VALUE SELECT MEMORY PC100/133

VS64MB100	64MB	8X64	8NS	$16
VS64MB133	64MB PC133	8X64	7.5NS	$16
VS128MB100	128MB	16X64	8NS	$20
VS128MB133	128MB PC133	16X64	7.5NS	$20
VS256MB100	256MB PC100	32X64	8NS	$37
VS256MB133	256MB PC133	32X64	7.5NS	$37
VS256REG133	256MB PC133	32X72	7.5NS	$54
VS512MB133	512MB PC133	64X64	7.5NS	$71

DDR RAM PC2100/2400

CM64SD128-2100	128MB	16X64 DDR	266MHZ	$36
CM64SD128-2400C2	128MB (CAS 2)	16X64 DDR	300MHZ	$38
CM64SD128-2100C2	128MB (CAS 2)	16X64 DDR	266MHZ	$41
CM72SD128-2100	128MB	16X72 DDR	266MHZ	$44
CM64SD256-2100	256MB	32X64 DDR	266MHZ	$52
CM64SD256-2400C2	256MB (CAS 2)	16X64 DDR	300MHZ	$67
CM72SD256-2100	256MB	32X72 DDR	266MHZ	$76
CM72SD256R-2100	256MB (REG)	32X72 DDR	266MHZ	$66
CM72SD512R-2100	512MB (REG)	64X72 DDR	266MHZ	$339

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TOSDM1502OEM	16X-48X DVD	ATAPI	115/95MS	256K	$59
TOSDR1102KIT	8X8X8X32	ATAPI	140/105MS	256K	$147
TOSDW2002KIT	6X-24XDVDRAM	ATAPI	120MS	8192K	$429

MITSUMI www.mitsumi.com

MODEL#	SPEED/TRANS	INTERFACE	ACCESS	CACHE	PRICE
MIT48XIDE	48X/7200KB	ATAPI	85MS	128K	$33
MIT48XIDEBLACK	48X/7200KB	ATAPI	85MS	128K	$37
MIT48050EM	8X/4X/32X	ATAPI OEM	135MS	2048K	$64
MIT48080EM	16X/8X/40X	ATAPI OEM	135MS	2048K	$86

YAMAHA www.yamaha.com

MODEL#	SPEED/TRANS	INTERFACE	ACCESS	CACHE	PRICE
YACRW2100EZKIT	16X/10X/40X	ATAPI	140MS	4096K	$137
YACRW2100SZKIT	16X/10X/40X	SCSI	140MS	4096K	$167
YACRW2200EZKIT	20X/10X/40X	ATAPI	160MS	8192K	$209
YACRW2100FXZ	16X/10X/40X	FIREWIRE	160MS	8192K	$334
YACRW2200FXZ	20X/10X/40X	FIREWIRE	150MS	8192K	$344

SONY www.sony.com

SY52XIDE	52X/7800KB	ATAPI	85MS	128K	$33
SYCRX140ECHOEM	8X/4X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$64
SYCRX160E/CHOEM	12X/8X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$87
SYCRX140E/CH	8X/4X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$107
SYCRX160E/CH	12X/8X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	4096K	$159
SYCRX1600L/A2	12X/8X/32X	FIREWIRE	150MS	4096K	$219
SYCRX145S/CH	10X/4X/32X	SCSI	150MS	4096K	$249

PLEXTOR www.plextor.com

PX-W1210TA	12X/10X/32X	ATAPI	150MS	2048K	$142
PX-W1610TA	16X/10X/40X	ATAPI	150MS	2048K	$174
PX-W2410TA	24X/10X/40X	ATAPI	150MS	2048K	$239

NOTEBOOK DRIVES

TOSHIBA www.toshiba.com

ALL TOSHIBA IDE NOTEBOOK DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 1YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
TO4313MAT	4300	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/8.4MM	$77
TO6015MAP	6000	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/9.5MM	$87
TO1016GAP	10000	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/9.5MM	$87
TO1516GAP	15000	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/9.5MM	$107
TO2016GAP	20000	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/9.5MM	$117
TO3017GAP	30000	13MS/4200	1024K	2.5"/9.5MM	$187

IBM www.ibm.com

ALL IBM IDE NOTEBOOK DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 1YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
IBMDJSA-210000	10000	12MS/4200	512K	2.5"/9.5MM	$87
IBMDJSA-220000	20000	12MS/4200	512K	2.5"/9.5MM	$117
IBMDJSA-230000	30000	12MS/4200	512K	2.5"/12.5MM	$187

MONITORS

ViewSonic www.viewsonic.com

VIE55	15"	.28DP	1280 X 1024	$131
VIE70	17"	.27DP	1280 X 1024	$162
VIE70F	17"	.25DP	1280 X 1024 (FLAT)	$184
VIE70M	17"	.27DP	1280 X 1024	$190
VIE70FB	17"	.25DP	1280 X 1024 (FLAT/BLACK)	$192
VIGS773	17"	.27DP	1280 X 1024	$209
VIE90	19"	.27DP	1600 X 1200	$216
VIG70M	17"	.27DP	1280 X 1024	$220
VIG70MB	17"	.27DP	1280 X 1024 (BLACK)	$220
VIE95	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200	$244
VIPS775	17"	.25DP	1600 X 1280	$264
VIE790	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200	$302
VIGS790	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200	$314
VIG90M	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200	$316
VIG90F	19"	.25DP	1600 X 1200 (FLAT)	$317
VIG90MB	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200 (BLACK)	$318
VIPF790	19"	.25DP	1600 X 1280	$347
VIPS790	19"	.25DP	1600 X 1280	$492
VIP220F	22"	.25DP	1600 X 1200	$692
VIGS815	21"	.25DP	1920 X 1440	$732
VIP225F	22"	.24DP	2048 X 1536 (FLAT)	$782
VIP817	21"	.25DP	2048 X 1536	$1439
VIVE150	LCD MONITOR 15" VIEWABLE 1024 X 768			$449
VIVP150M	LCD MONITOR 15" VIEWABLE 1024 X 768			$567
VIVE170	LCD MONITOR 17" VIEWABLE 1280 X 1024			$759
VIVG175	LCD MONITOR 17.4" VIEWABLE 1280 X 1024			$862
VIVG181	LCD MONITOR 18.1" VIEWABLE 1280 X 1024			$1349

RELYSIS www.relysis.com

RETE555	15"	.28DP	1280 X 1024	$112
RETE770	17"	.28DP	1280 X 1024	$129
RETE786H	17"	.25DP	1600 X 1200	$157
RETE786T	17"	.26DP	1280 X 1024	$167
RETE988	19"	.26DP	1600 X 1200	$227
RETL500A	LCD MONITOR 15" VIEWABLE 1024 X 768			$359
RETL700A	LCD MONITOR 17" VIEWABLE 1280 X 1024			$779

IDE HARD DRIVES

WESTERN DIGITAL www.wdc.com

ALL WESTERN DIGITAL IDE DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 3YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
WD200AB	20500	8.5MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$81
WD200BB	20000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$84
WD400AB	40000	8.5MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$93
WD300BB	30000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$93
WD400BB	40000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$107
WD600AB	60000	8.5MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$127
WD600BB	60000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$154
WD800AB	80000	8.5MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$177
WD800BB	80000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$199
WD1000BB	100000	9 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$259

IBM www.ibm.com

ALL IBM IDE DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 3YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
IBM35L020	20000	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$91
IBM35L040	40000	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$109
IBM35L060	60000	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$157
IBM35L075	75000	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$224

Maxtor www.maxtor.com

ALL MAXTOR IDE DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 3YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
MAX204-5400	204009	5 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$77
MAX153-7200	15300	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$78
MAX204-7200	20400	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$86
MAX307-5400	30700	9.5 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$90
MAX409-5400	40900	9 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$90
MAX307-7200	30700	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$101
MAX409-7200	40900	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$109
MAX614-7200	61400	9.5 MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$167
MAX819-5400	81900	9 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$179
MAX1000-5400	100000	11 MS/5400	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$237

CONTROLLERS

PROMISE TECHNOLOGY, INC. www.promisetechnology.com

PRULTRA66	ULTRA ATA66 PCI 4 HARD DRIVE	$22
PRULTRA100TX2	ULTRA ATA100 TX2 PCI 4 HARD DRIVE	$26
PRULTRA100	ULTRA ATA100 PCI 4 HARD DRIVE	$36
PRFASTRAK100TX2	ULTRA ATA100 RAID TX2 PCI	$74
PRFASTRAK100	ULTRA ATA100 RAID PCI	$77
PRFASTRAK100LP	ULTRA ATA100 RAID LOW PROFILE PCI	$107

adaptec www.adaptec.com

AD29160OEM	ULTRA 160 PCI BUS MSTR 160MB/SEC OEM	$195
AD19160KIT	ULTRA 160 PCI BUS MSTR 160MB/SEC RETAIL	$222
AD29160KIT	ULTRA 160 PCI BUS MSTR 160MB/SEC RETAIL	$294
AD2100SKIT	ULTRA 160 PCI SCSI RAID 160MB/SEC 32MB	$447
AD3210SKIT	ULTRA 160 PCI SCSI RAID 160MB/SEC 32MB	$744
AD3410SKIT	ULTRA 160 PCI SCSI RAID 160MB/SEC 64MB	$1054

SCSI HARD DRIVES

WESTERN DIGITAL www.wdc.com

ALL WESTERN DIGITAL SCSI DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 5YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
WD91FG	9100	6.6MS/10000	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$99
WDE9150-0050	9100	5.2MS/10000	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$104

Seagate www.seagate.com

ALL SEAGATE SCSI DRIVES LISTED HAVE A 5YR WARRANTY

MODEL#	CAP.(MB)	ACCESS/RPM	CACHE	FORM/HT	PRICE
ST39236LW	92005.	8MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$187
ST39216N	9200	5.8MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$179
ST39236LWV	9200	5.8MS/7200	4096K	3.5"/1"H	$199
ST318416N	18400	5.8MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$234
ST318416W	18400	5.8MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$234
ST318437LW	18400	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$199
ST318436LWV	18400	5.8MS/7200	4096K	3.5"/1"H	$237
ST318405LW	18400	5.4MS/10,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$229
ST318405LC	18400	5.4MS/10,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$229
ST318451LW	18400	5.2MS/15,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$334
ST318451LC	18400	5.2MS/15,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$334
ST336737LW	36700	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$359
ST336737LC	36700	8.5MS/7200	2048K	3.5"/1"H	$359
ST336705LW	36700	5.4MS/10,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$427
ST336704LWV	36700	5.2MS/10,000	16000K	3.5"/FH	$449
ST373405LW	73400	4.9MS/10,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$787
ST373405LC	73400	4.9MS/10,000	4096K	3.5"/FH	$787
ST373405LCV	73400	4.9MS/10,000	16000K	3.5"/FH	$799
ST1181677LWV	181600	7.4MS/7200	16000K	3.5"/1"H	$1479
ST1181677LCV	181600	7.4MS/7200	16000K	3.5"/1"H	$1484

VIDEO CARDS

matrox www.matrox.com

MATG45016DDR	G450 16MB, DDR AGP OEM (DUAL)	$67
MATG45032DDR	G450 32MB, DDR AGP OEM (DUAL)	$92
MATG45032DDRBOX	G450 32MB, DDR AGP RET(DUAL)	$121
MATMARG45032A	MARVEL G450 32MB, DDR AGP OEM	$182

ATI www.atitech.com

ATIX200032A	EXPERT 2000 AGP OEM VER 32MB	$39
ATIX2KPRO32A	EXPERT 2000PRO AGP OEM VER 32MB	$43
ATIRFPRO32ATV	RAGE FURY PRO AGP OEM 32MB W/TV	$63
ATIRADLE32A	RADEON LE AGP OEM 32MB DDR	$75
ATIRADVE32A	RADEON VE AGP OEM 32MB DDR DUAL	$81
ATIAIWPRO32A	ALL-IN-WONDER PRO AGP OEM 32MB	$99
ATIRFMAX64	RAGE FURY MAX AGP OEM 64MB	$112
ATIRADEON64A	RADEON AGP OEM 64MB DDR	$159
ATIAIWRAD32A	ALL-IN-WOND RADEON AGP OEM 32MB	$184

ABIT www.abit-usa.com

ABGF2MX20032A	GEFORCE-2 MX200 AGP 32MB	$49
ABGF2MX20032A	GEFORCE-2 MX200 AGP 32MB W/TV	$54
ABGF2MX40064A	GEFORCE-2 MX400 AGP 64MB	$70
ABGF2MX40064T	GEFORCE-2 MX400 AGP 64MB W/TV	$77

ASUS www.asus.com

ASV710032A	GEFORCE-2 MX AGP 32MB	$87
ASV710032ATV	GEFORCE-2 MX W/TV AGP 32MB	$92
ASV71002VD	GEFORCE-2 TWINVIEW AGP 32MB	$101
ASV7700P32A	GEFORCE-2 AGP 32MB DDR	$124
ASV7700DEL32A	GEFORCE-2 DEL AGP 32MB DDR	$157
ASV7700P64A	GEFORCE-2 AGP 64MB DDR	$164
ASV7700PROP64	GEFORCE-2 AGP 64MB PRO PURE	$172
ASV7700DEL64A	GEFORCE-2 DEL AGP 64MB DDR	$199
ASV7700ULTP64	GEFORCE-2 AGP 64MB ULTRA PURE	$337
ASV8200P64A	GEFORCE-3 PUR AGP 64MB DDR	$342
ASV8200D64A	GEFORCE-3 DEL AGP 64MB DDR	$374

SOUND CARDS

CREATIVE www.creative.com

CLCT4520	SOUND BLSTR AWE 64 ISA OEM	$24
CLCT4750	SOUND BLSTR PCI 128 OEM	$31
CLSBLDBYOEM	SOUND BLSTR LIVE DOLBY 5.1 OEM	$33
CLCT4832	SOUND BLSTR LIVE VALUE PCI OEM	$45
CLSBLIVE5.1OE	SOUND BLSTR LIVE OEM	$61
CLSBLDBYR	SOUND BLSTR LIVE DOLBY 5.1 RETAIL	$65
CLSBLXG5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE X-GAMER RETAIL	$89
CLSBLMP3+5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE MP3+ RETAIL	$89
CLSBAUDMP3+R	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY MP3+ RETAIL	$89
CLSBLPLAT5.1R	SOUND BLSTR LIVE PLATINUM RETAIL	$175
CLSBAUDPLATR	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY PLATINUM INT	$179
CLSBPLATEXTR	SOUND BLSTR AUDIGY PLATINUM EXT	$227

MODEMS

3Com www.3com.com

3C3595	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/WIN	$21
3C3594	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/VOICE	$24
3C2975	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/NO VOICE	$33
3C2974	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/VOICE	$37
3C2977	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/NON WIN	$43
3C2976	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 OEM/NON WIN	$52

CREATIVE www.creative.com

CLDI5655	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 VOICE	$25
CLDI5660	56 KBPS DATA/14.4kbps FAX INT PCI V.90 NON WIN	$25

REMOVABLES

IOMEGA www.iomega.com

IOZIP100IDE	REMOVABLE DRIVE	100MB INT ZIP	IDE OEM	$44
IOZIP250IDE	REMOVABLE DRIVE	250MB INT ZIP	IDE OEM	$67
IOZIP250USB	REMOVABLE DRIVE	250MB EXT ZIP	USB	$164
IOSCSI2GBINT	REMOVABLE DRIVE	2GB INT JAZ	SCSI	$259
IOSCSI2GBEXT	REMOVABLE DRIVE	2GB EXT JAZ	SCSI	$314

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CHECKING Out

BY KIERSTEN CONNER-SAX

FEED ME. FEED ME. WHERE'S MY BALL? FEED ME.

Want to know how your dog feels? Takara, a toy maker in Japan, recently introduced the Bow-lingual, a device that gauges your dog's moods by analyzing his bark. Some 200 words are used to deduce six canine emotions, which are then transmitted to the owner's pager. For the belletrist hound, the Dog Diary mode summarizes Fido's feelings over the course of a day, using 100 different sentences.

REAL PRODUCTS, REAL THANKFUL

Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to look back, take stock, and give thanks. Here are some of the technical innovations that we're thankful for.

1. **Brookstone's Chef's Fork Plus with Thermometer.** Read the turkey's cooking temperature digitally! But downloading the data to a PDA could be easier.

2. **CarePackages.com *(www.carepackages.com)*.** It's great to let our loved ones know that we're thinking about them during the holiday season, especially if it means we don't have to visit.

3. **The 2GHz Pentium 4 desktop.** Sure, it costs a bit more than a Pentium III, but boy is that half-second of improved efficiency worth it!

4. **TiVo's DirecTV receiver.** Our empty, meaningless existence would *really* be unbearable without it during the holidays.

5. **SkyGolf GPS Personal Digital Caddie.** Instantly tells you the number of yards between your ball and the hole at more than 500 golf courses! And they say technology hasn't meaningfully improved our lives.

6. **PayPal.** Makes it a snap to pay for the things that are important to us, like *Star Wars* lunch boxes and antique Pez dispensers.

GOBBLE FAQ: BUYING A TURKEY ONLINE

Q *Holidays are about "togetherness," but I dislike interacting with others. Can I buy my Thanksgiving turkey online?*

A Sure! Grocery stores may offer convenience and reasonable prices, but why bother when you can have a home-cooked meal shipped from a warehouse? Besides, frozen-food aisles can be really chilly.

Q *Should I visit Turkey.com?*

A Nope, that's about the country.

Q *How about the National Wild Turkey Federation's (www.nwtf.com) Turkey Shoppe?*

A Only if you're looking for hunting gear and what appears to be paramilitary supplies.

Q *The National Turkey Federation (www.turkeyfed.org)?*

A You'll find virtual-chef cooking demonstrations and a recipe for smoked-turkey chowder, but no actual turkeys.

Q *Butterball.com must have something.*

A You can attend Butterball University (and take the Butterball U Online Final Exam), but all your fancy book learnin' still won't get you the bird.

Q *All right then, where?*

A Omahasteaks.com *(www.omahasteaks.com)* offers a 10-pound whole-basted turkey for $49, plus $13.99 for shipping. Best of all, they'll throw in a "10 count" of Potatoes Au Gratin for free.

Q *Is it any good?*

A Who knows? Trust us—the grocery store will be *really* full of people. Some of them might even touch you.

AFP PHOTO/YOSHIKAZU TSUNO(TOP LEFT)

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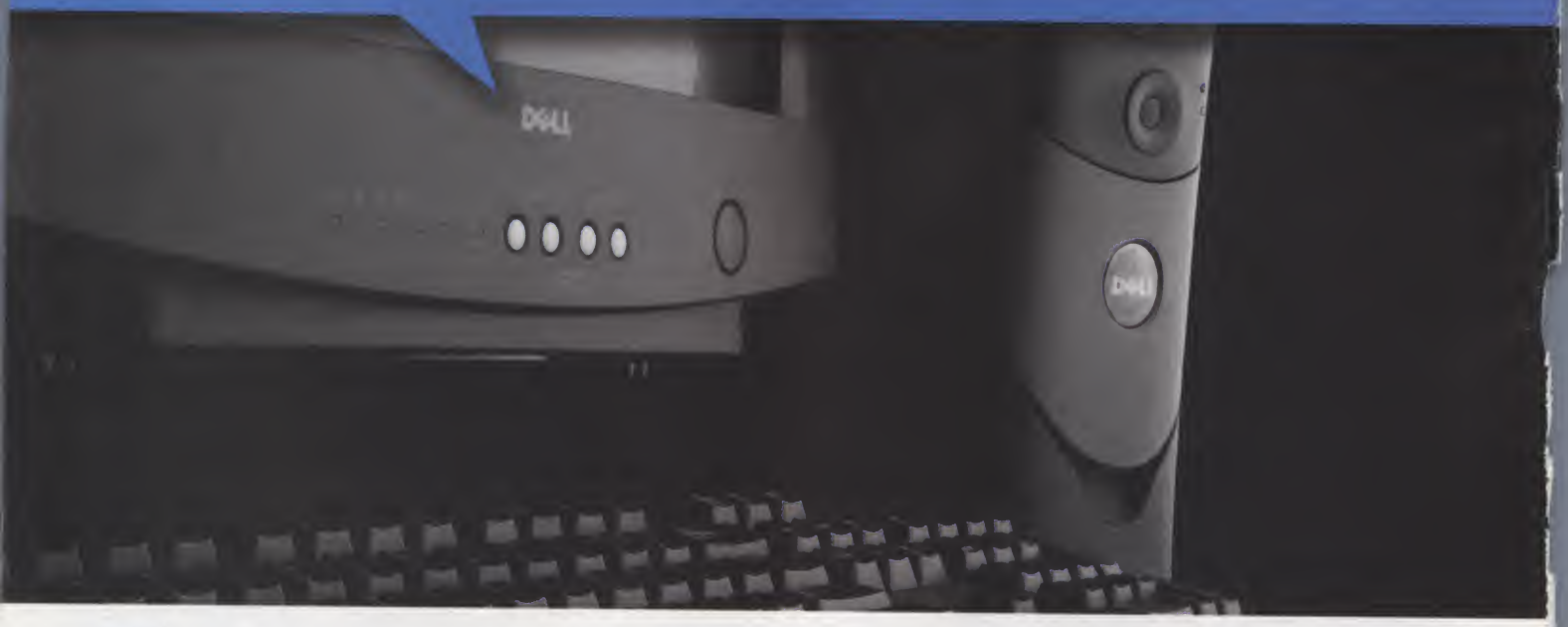

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- 16MB ATI® Rage 128 Ultra 4X AGP Graphics Card
- 48X Max CD-ROM; Integrated AC97 Audio
- Integrated 3Com® 10/100 NIC
- MS® Windows® 2000 Professional
- OptiFrame™ Small Desktop Tool-less Chassis
- 3-Yr NBD On-Site Service[1]

$999 Business Loan: $27/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00468-391009a

Recommended upgrade:
- 3-Yr Same Day (4-Hour) 5x10 On-Site Service,[49] add $99

The New Dell OptiPlex GX240. I'm the network-ready business desktop with an Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor and a very impressive price tag. Fully manageable and optimized to integrate with your network, I'm thoroughly tested to give you the highest possible level of reliability. And with Dell's award-winning service and support – optional 4-Hour[13] On-Site NT support response service[49] – I might just be the best networking solution ever.

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Call: M-F 7a-9p Sat 10a-6p Sun 12p - 5p CT
Prices, specifications and availability may change without notice. Taxes and shipping charges extra, and vary. Cannot be combined with other offers or discounts. U.S. only. [1]Service may be provided by third party. Technician will be dispatched, if necessary, following phone-based troubleshooting. To receive Next-Business-Day service, Dell must notify service provider before 5 pm (depending on service contract) customer's time. Availability varies. [3]For hard drives, GB means 1 billion bytes; accessible capacity varies with operating environment. [11]Monthly payment based on 48-MONTH 12.49% INTEREST RATE FOR QUALIFIED BUSINESS CUSTOMERS. OFFER VARIES BY CREDITWORTHINESS OF CUSTOMER AS DETERMINED BY LENDER. Taxes, fees and shipping charges extra and vary. Business Loan from CIT OnLine Bank to small business customers with approved credit. [13]For 7x24 service, Dell will dispatch a service technician within 4 hours of determining the hardware problem. [49]Service may be provided by a third-party provider under contract with Dell. Technician will be dispatched if necessary following phone based troubleshooting. For 5x10 service, Dell will dispatch a technician to the customer site within 4 hours of determining the hardware problem. The service technician may not arrive until the following business day if dispatched after 4:00 pm local time. Available within a 125-mile radius of over 80 metropolitan areas. Customers not located within a 125-mile radius of the stocking locations are not eligible for this offering. Not available with any other Dell systems. Available in the U.S. only. Dell, the stylized E logo, E-Value and OptiPlex are trademarks of Dell Computer Corporation. Intel, Intel Inside, Pentium and Celeron are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the United States and other countries. MS, Microsoft and Windows are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. 3Com and Fast EtherLink are registered trademarks of 3Com Corporation. Trinitron is a registered trademark of Sony Corporation. Dell cannot be held responsible for errors in typography or photography. ©2001 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved.

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Dimension™ 2100 Desktop

NEW Affordable Desktop Solution
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 900MHz
- 128MB Shared[10] SDRAM
- 20GB[5] Value HD
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- Intel® 3D AGP Graphics
- 48X Max CD-ROM
- MS® Windows® Me & MS® Works Suite 2001
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2]; 1-Yr NBD On-Site Service[3]

$599 Business Loan: **$16**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-591005

Recommended upgrades:
- 17" (16.0" vis) M781s Monitor, add $110
- 2-Yr NBD On-Site Service,[3] add $69

Dimension™ 4300 Desktop

NEW Advanced Desktop Solution
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.5GHz
- 128MB SDRAM
- 20GB[5] (7200 RPM) Ultra ATA HD
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- 16MB ATI® Rage™ Graphics
- 48X Max CD-ROM
- Integrated Audio with SoundBlaster® Pro/16
- MS® Windows® Me & MS® Works Suite 2001
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[2]; 1-Yr NBD On-Site Service[3]

$799 Business Loan: **$21**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-591007

Recommended upgrades:
- Intel® Pro 100+ PCI NIC, add $40
- MS® Windows® 2000 Professional, add $99

OptiPlex™ GX240 Desktop

NEW Network-Optimized Managed PC
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.7GHz
- 128MB PC133 Non-ECC SDRAM
- 20GB[5] (7200 RPM) ATA/100 HD
- 16MB ATI® Rage™ 128 Ultra 4X AGP Graphics Card
- 16X Max CD-RW; Integrated AC97 Audio
- Integrated 3Com® 10/100 NIC
- MS® Windows® 2000 Professional
- OptiFrame™ Small Mini-Tower Tool-less Chassis
- 3-Yr NBD On-Site Service[3]
- Monitor Not Included

$1099 Business Loan: **$29**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-391010

Recommended upgrade:
- 3-Yr Same-Day (4-Hour) 7x24 On-Site Service,[3] add $199

Dell | Small Business Notebooks

Inspiron™ 2500 Notebook

Practical and Affordable Notebook
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 800MHz
- 12.1" SVGA TFT Display
- 64MB Shared[10] PC100 SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Fixed Internal 24X Max Variable CD-ROM
- Intel® Integrated 3D® AGP Video
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K Capable[6] Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty,[2] 1-Yr Mail-in Service, 1-Yr Phone Tech Support

$899 Business Loan: **$24**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-891008

Recommended upgrades:
- 3-Yr Mail-in Service with Lifetime Phone Tech Support, add $99
- APC® Notebook Surge Protector, add $30

Inspiron™ 8100 Notebook

Pinnacle of Performance Notebook
- NEW Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.2GHz-M
- 15" SXGA+TFT Display
- 128MB PC133 SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Fixed Internal 24X Max Variable CD-ROM
- 16MB DDR 4X AGP NVIDIA® GeForce2 Go® 3D Video
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal Mini-PC 56K Capable[6] Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Office XP Small Business
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty,[2] 1-Yr Mail-in Service, 1-Yr Phone Tech Support

$2149 Business Loan: **$57**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-891021

Recommended upgrade:
- MS® Office XP Professional, add $199

Latitude™ C500 Notebook

NEW Wireless-Ready Value Notebook
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 800MHz
- 12.1" SVGA Active Matrix Display
- 64MB SDRAM; 10GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- 8MB ATI® Mobility™ 128 Video, 2X AGP
- MS® Windows® 98, Second Edition
- Modular 24X Max CD-ROM/Floppy Drive
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K Capable[6] SoftModem
- 1-Yr NBD On-Site Service[3]

$1249 Business Loan: **$33**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-791012

Recommended upgrade:
- 14.1" XGA Active Matrix Display, add $50

Dell | Servers and Workstations

PowerEdge™ 500SC Server

NEW Basic Server at Our Lowest Price
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 800MHz
- 128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM
- 20GB[5] (7200 RPM) IDE HD
- Embedded Intel® 10/100 NIC
- 48X Max IDE CD-ROM
- 1-Yr NBD On-Site Service,[3] 1-Yr Parts[3]
- 7x24 Phone Tech Support

$649 Business Loan: **$17**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-291006

Recommended upgrades:
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.0GHz, add $199
- 3-Yr Same-Day (4-Hour) 5x10 On-Site Service,[3] add $349

PowerEdge™ 1400SC Server

NEW Small Business Value Server
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 933MHz
- Dual Processor Capable
- 128MB 133MHz ECC SDRAM
- 18GB[5] (10K RPM) Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI HD
- Embedded Intel® 10/100 NIC
- Embedded Ultra3 (Ultra 160) SCSI Controller
- 3-Yr NBD Bronze On-Site Service[3]
- 7x24 Phone Tech Support

$999 Business Loan: **$27**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-291009

Recommended upgrades:
- MS® Windows® 2000 Server, add $799

Precision™ 340 Workstation

NEW Advanced Performance Workstation
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.7GHz
- 128MB PC800 ECC RDRAM
- 20GB[5] (7200 RPM) ATA/100 HD
- ATI® Radeon VE 32MB 4X AGP Graphics Card (Dual Monitor Capable)
- Integrated NIC & Sound; 48X Max CD-ROM
- MS® Windows® 2000 Professional
- New Small Desktop Chassis
- 3-Yr NBD On-Site Service[3]
- 7x24 Dedicated Workstation Phone Tech Support
- Monitor Not Included

$1199 Business Loan: **$32**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00467-491011

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Dimension™ 4300 Desktop

NEW Advanced Desktop Solution
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.50GHz
- 128MB SDRAM
- 20GB[3] (7200 RPM) Ultra ATA HD
- 17" (16.0" vis) Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics
- SB Live! Digital Sound; HK-195 Speakers
- PCI DataFax Modem; 10/100 PCI NIC
- MS® Windows® Me & MS Works® Suite 2001
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty[7]; 1-Yr NBD On-Site Service[1]

$999 Business Loan: **$27**/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code:
00465-591009a

Recommended upgrades:
- 2-Yr NBD On-Site Service[1], add $69
- MS® Windows® 2000 Professional, add $99

The powerful, highly affordable Dimension 4300 desktop. I'm the power and performance of an Intel® Pentium® 4 processor for a lot less than you ever thought possible. Which makes me an easy choice, whether you need a computer for home or for the office. I'm the reliability you need, at a price you can handle, backed by the best service and support in the industry. Which makes me more than a powerful computer with an Intel® Pentium® 4 processor, it makes me a dream come true.

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Dimension™ 4300 Desktop

Advanced Performance, Smart Value
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.50GHZ
- 128MB SDRAM at 133 MHz
- 20GB[5] Value HD
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- 16MB ATI Rage™ Ultra 4X AGP Graphics Card
- 16X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- Integrated Audio with SoundBlaster® Pro/16
- Harman Kardon® HK-195 Speakers
- 56K[6] PCI Data Fax Modem for Windows®
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]
- 1-Yr At-Home Service,[4] 1-Yr Limited Warranty,[2] 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

$899 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-501008

Dimension™ 4300 Desktop

Advanced Performance, Smart Value
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.50GHz
- 128MB SDRAM at 133MHz
- 40GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 HD (7200 RPM)
- 15" (13.8" vis) E551 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV-Out
- 16x/10x/40x CD-RW Drive with Roxio's Easy CD Creator®
- SB Live! 1024V Digital Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-395 Speakers
- 56K[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]
- 1-Yr At-Home Service,[4] 1-Yr Limited Warranty,[2] 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

$1099 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-501010a

Dimension™ 8200 Desktop

Cutting-Edge Technology
- Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor at 1.70GHz
- 128MB PC800 RDRAM
- 60GB[5] Ultra ATA/100 HD (7200 RPM)
- 17" (16.0" vis) E770 Monitor
- 32MB NVIDIA® GeForce2 MX 4X AGP Graphics Card with TV-Out
- 16X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 16x/10x/40x CD-RW Drive with Roxio's Easy CD Creator®
- Turtle Beach Santa Cruz DSP Sound Card
- Harman Kardon® HK-395 Speakers
- 56K[6] PCI Telephony Modem for Windows®
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]
- 1-Yr At-Home Service,[4] 1-Yr Limited Warranty,[2] 1-Yr 24x7 Phone Support

$1599 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-501015

Dell | Home Notebooks

Inspiron™ 2500 Notebook

Great System, Great Price
- Intel® Celeron™ Processor at 800MHz
- 14.1" XGA TFT Display
- 128MB Shared PC100 SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Fixed Internal 24X Max CD-ROM
- Intel® Integrated 3D AGP Video with up to 8MB Shared System Memory
- SoundBlaster® Compatible
- 4-Cell Li-Ion Battery
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K[6] Fax Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-In Service

$1099 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-801010m

Inspiron™ 4000 Notebook

Thin & Light
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 900MHz Featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 14.1" XGA TFT Display
- 192MB 100MHz SDRAM
- 20GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Modular Removable 8X Max DVD-ROM Drive
- 8MB ATI Rage® Mobility 128™ 2X AGP 3D Video
- SoundBlaster® Compatible Sound with Wavetable
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K[6] Fax Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10]
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service

$1629 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-801016m

Inspiron™ 8100 Notebook

Ultimate Multimedia Mobile Desktop
- Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.13GHz-M featuring Intel® SpeedStep™ Technology
- 15" Super XGA+TFT Display
- 256MB 133MHz SDRAM
- 30GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Fixed Internal 8X DVD-ROM Drive
- 32MB DDR NVIDIA® GeForce2 Go® 4X AGP 3D Video
- Harman Kardon® Odyssey® 2 Speakers (Internal)
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery with ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K[6] Fax Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Works Suite 2001
- 6 Months of DellNet™ by MSN® Internet Access[10] Included
- 1-Yr Limited Warranty[2], 1-Yr Mail-in Service

$2499 Ask us about no payments for 90 days for qualified customers
E-VALUE Code: 00467-801024m

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I'm a desktop trapped in a notebook's body.

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New Pinnacle of Performance Notebook
- NEW Intel® Pentium® III Processor at 1.2GHz-M
- 15" SXGA+TFT Display
- 128MB PC133 SDRAM
- 10GB[5] Ultra ATA HD
- Fixed Internal 24X Max Variable CD-ROM
- 16MB DDR 4X AGP NVIDIA® GeForce2 Go® 3D Video
- 8-Cell Li-Ion Battery w/ExpressCharge™ Technology
- Internal Mini-PCI 56K Capable® Modem
- MS® Windows® Me; MS® Office XP Small Business
- 1-Yr Ltd Warranty,[1] 1-Yr Mail-in Service, 1-Yr Phone Tech Support

$2149 Business Loan: $57/mo., 48 mos.[11]
E-VALUE Code: 00466-891021

Recommended upgrade:
- MS® Windows® Office XP Professional, add $199

The incredibly powerful, 1.2GHz-M Dell Inspiron 8100. I'm everything you'd expect from a desktop except the desk. With my Intel® Pentium® III processor, I'm every bit a desktop. But you'll quickly find I'm a lot easier to take on the road. My 15" display and 16MB graphics card bring multimedia images to brilliant life at amazing speed. And I can burn a CD and run a DVD all at the same time on battery power alone. I'm astounding power you can take anywhere.

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